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## Police-Led Boys' Clubs in England and Wales, 1918-1951

### Thesis

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## **Abstract**

Police-led boys' clubs were established across England and Wales, in industrial towns and cities, during the interwar and immediate post-war period. They were founded and organised by Chief Constables, and high-ranking police officers. Their activities were reported upon in local, regional and national newspapers. Club organisers aimed to harness the 'high spirits' of boys in a positive way, removing them from the streets and the temptations of juvenile delinquency. They were run on a daily basis by working-class Police Constables, who were motivated for a variety of reasons to volunteer in them during their free time. Police-led boys' clubs were endorsed by royals and members of the aristocracy, facilitated and financed by local dignitaries, and attended on by doctors and dentists. The daily activities of the clubs were dominated by sports such as boxing and gymnastics. Camaraderie between the boys and the police officers who instructed these sports was encouraged. These pursuits used aspects of masculinity and physicality to engender self-restraint, a strong work ethic and produce model citizens. Camping, both in weekend and summer camps, was an integral part of the club programme. Camp organisers aimed to create good citizens through emphasis on character-building exercises, friendship and engagement with nature.

The example of the police-led club is used to inform youth justice today. Comparisons are made between how boxing clubs aim to temper violent tendencies exhibited by certain types of masculinities; and how the example of the clubs speaks directly to youth crime prevention approaches outlined in the UK Government's Serious Violence Strategy. However, the potential for the recreation of the police-led club in a modern setting is somewhat limited.



*For my wife Petra*

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## Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis focuses upon the police-led boys' club movement in interwar and immediate post-war England and Wales. It investigates whether the police-led boys' club was a phenomenon in its own right; by placing it within the wider context of the national boys' club movement. It will do this by exploring a variety of themes including the national impact of police-led clubs, working-class cultures, middle-class interventionism, masculinity and physicality and the role of camping. Finally it is considered in what ways the example of the police-led club can inform tackling youth crime today.

At least 15 police-led boys' clubs were founded in England and Wales in the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1918 and 1947 clubs were founded by Chief Constables, former Chief Constables and high-ranking police officers in, Norwich, Scarborough, Hyde, Lancaster, Congleton, Swansea, Manchester, Hull and Croydon.<sup>1</sup> Founders aimed to tackle juvenile delinquency within their locality directly through their preventative work. Though clubs were organised and founded by high-ranking police officers, their day-to-day activities were run by low-ranking Police Constables and Sergeants. Most of the activities provided were physical and concentrated on sports such as boxing, gymnastics and football or outdoor pursuits like camping.

### Building on research into the history of policing youth

To date almost no academic research has been done exclusively into police-led boys' clubs. Passing references have been made by police historians including Barbara Weinberger, and Louise Jackson and Angela Bartie. Weinberger wrote about Norwich

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<sup>1</sup> Charles E.B. Russell and Lilian M. Russell, *Lads' Clubs: Their History Organisation and Management*, London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1932, pp. 251-257; Robert Walker, *Seventy Years Young: A History of the Norwich Lads Club 1918-1988*, Norwich: Alpha Press, 1990, p. 3; 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club', *The Times*, 6 October 1928, p. 9; 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979: Lancaster Boys Club Golden Jubilee 1929-1979 Souvenir Brochure', Lancaster Boys and Girls Club, at [http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more\\_info.asp?current\\_id=307](http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=307), accessed 26 February 2015, p. 2; 'Police Friends of York', *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, 15 January 1932, p. 35; John Barber, 'Straight and True: The Story of the Swansea Boys Club from the 1930s to the 1960s' (unpublished essay), at [http://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/creo\\_files/upload/files/Straight%20and%20True%20-%20John%20Barber.pdf](http://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/creo_files/upload/files/Straight%20and%20True%20-%20John%20Barber.pdf), accessed 1 January 2016; 'Police Fit Out Three Boys' Clubs', *The Observer*, 5 December 1943, p. 5; Manchester, Greater Manchester Police Museum and Archives (henceforth GMPMA), Lads' Club Papers, Tom Doody, *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes, 1937-1940*; Louise A. Jackson with Angela Bartie, *Policing youth: Britain 1945-70*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014, pp. 24-25; Barbara Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World: An Oral History of English Policing from the 1930s to the 1960s*, Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995, p. 150.

Lads' Club, founded by John Henry Dain in 1918, in her 1995 oral history of English policing, in which she defined it as a 'special police policy towards juveniles' where 'Dain helped reduce juvenile crime figures through the practice of holding "Sunday courts" at police headquarters, where offenders were reprimanded and encouraged to join the Lads' Club, rather than taken to the juvenile court.'<sup>2</sup> Although Weinberger acknowledged the existence of police-led clubs in 'Swansea, Manchester, Hull and Croyden,' as well as Norwich, she adds that 'many police authorities thought this work best left to others and that the police already had too many calls on their time.'<sup>3</sup> Jackson and Bartie make brief mention of two police-led clubs: one at Manchester which they state was established in order to offer 'structured recreational opportunities to prevent delinquency in wartime,' and one at Croydon where 'divisional police officers were involved in fund-raising, organising the club and instructing boys in various sports.'<sup>4</sup>

Not only is research into police-led boys' clubs valuable in its own right as it investigates uncharted territory, it also develops the work of historians focusing on the history of policing youths, in particular the work of historians Weinberger, David Wolcott, Joanne Klein and Jackson and Bartie. Weinberger's research has explored the ways discretion was used in policing youths. She comments on how police officers used social 'signals' to distinguish between cheeky children and delinquents and were generally paternalistic in their dealings with children. In her work, the oral accounts of former police officers reveal a nostalgia for a 'more stable and clearly defined social order' as 'the values of the class and gender from which they mostly were drawn tied in effortlessly with the manner of policing required by and acceptable to the authorities and general (middle and upper working-class) public.'<sup>5</sup> Her insights into the use of discretion and paternalism can be further expanded by research into police-led boys' clubs in that they involved informal, daily interaction between police officers and boys.

David Wolcott also emphasises the role of discretion in policing youths in his work focusing on the first half of twentieth century in America. He reveals a "wedding-cake" model, whereby police controlled the flow and direction of juvenile justice, by firstly

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<sup>2</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 150-151.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>5</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 208.

deciding whether or not to deal with an incident informally, then discretionarily targeting potential young offenders and finally deciding whether or not youths were detained. He argues that police officers made daily, crucial decisions regarding the youth justice system and consequently ‘further research into the history of juvenile justice should focus less on juvenile courts in isolation, and more on the police and other institutional actors in the complex process of regulating adolescent crime and delinquency.’<sup>6</sup> Such research is fulfilled by investigation into police-led boys’ clubs as they were used as a means to regulate local juvenile delinquency in industrial towns and cities, in this case in England and Wales rather than America.

Joanne Klein’s research reveals the everyday lives and concerns of low-ranking police officers and their place within the working-class community. Tensions regarding noise levels, space and privacy flared; challenging notions of masculinity and respectability for both the police and their neighbours.<sup>7</sup> Klein’s work illustrates the individual lives of ordinary Police Constables in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool and details force expectations and duties, internal force relationships, relationships between constables and the public and domestic life.<sup>8</sup> Police Constables received formal and informal training and, again, frequently had to use their discretion. ‘On duty, they brought the criminal justice system and working-class culture together in unexpected ways, shaping law enforcement through their own notions of what policing meant. They also decided what to notice and ignore,’ for example, in exercising discretion with juveniles.<sup>9</sup> Relevant to Klein’s examination of the individual lives of working-class Police Constables is how the study of police-led boys’ clubs shines a spot-light on the lives of the low-ranking officers who ran club activities on a day-to-day basis. For example, it reveals the significance of the types of relationship that the officers had with the boys within the informal setting of the club, what motivated individual officers to volunteer their free time, and whether the

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<sup>6</sup> David Wolcott, ‘“The Cop Will Get You”: The Police and Discretionary Juvenile Justice 1890-1940,’ *Journal of Social History* 35.2 (2001), pp. 362-3.

<sup>7</sup> Joanne Klein, ‘“Moving on”, Men and the Changing Character of Interwar Working-Class Neighbourhoods: From the Files of the Manchester and Liverpool City Police’, *Journal of Social History* 38.2 (2004), pp. 407-422.

<sup>8</sup> Joanne Klein, *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, 1900-1939*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 2.

clubs were an example of the ‘criminal justice system and working-class culture’ coming ‘together in unexpected ways.’

Finally, research into police-led clubs builds on the work of Jackson and Bartie. In their recent publication *Policing youth: Britain 1945-70*, they have charted ‘continuity and change in the moral regulation of young people’ by ‘identifying mechanisms that were ultimately contingent on the agency of the interpersonal, forged through everyday encounters, relationships and experiences.’<sup>10</sup> As argued above, the study of police clubs looks at the relationships between police officers and boys that developed through their everyday encounters through club activities. Moreover, Jackson and Bartie state that the period between 1945 and 1970 saw ‘the demise of a particular model of “citizenship”, inherited from the Victorian past, that emphasised the building of character through conformity, hard work and the performance of gendered respectability’<sup>11</sup> It is fascinating to ascertain how far the police-led clubs conformed to this traditional model of citizenship, and how that impacted upon their longevity. Thus the research in this thesis offers a prequel to Jackson and Bartie’s work commenting on the continuity and change of certain aspects of policing youth from the beginning of the interwar period.

### **Youth movements and their context**

Following on from how the research relates to the history of policing youth it useful to give a broad overview of the history of youth movements and the related topics of control of working-class youth, and the popularity of eugenics and physical culture during the interwar period. Focus upon these subjects aims to demonstrate how the thesis sits within the context of this literature and addresses the issues it poses.

The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century saw the growth of the cadet corps and the birth of organised youth movements, many inspired by muscular Christianity. Some of these youth movements were uniformed, some were militaristic in outlook, whilst others were pacifist. Youth movements founded in this period included the Boy’s Brigade established in 1883 by William Alexander Smith, the Boy Scout Movement founded in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell, (and subsequently the Girl Guides

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<sup>10</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 226.

<sup>11</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 168.

in 1910 under the leadership of his sister Agnes Baden-Powell), the order of Woodcraft Chivalry established by Ernest Westlake in 1916, the Kibbo Kift by John Hargrave in 1920 and the Woodcraft Folk created by Leslie Paul in 1925.<sup>12</sup> Youth movements aimed to ‘attract members with a varied programme which consciously mixed recreation with education, welfare, and sometimes church attendance.’<sup>13</sup> In the late nineteenth century the main providers of funding for youth organisations came from philanthropic individuals and religious groups. By the early twentieth century the statutory bodies, such as local education authorities, became increasingly responsible for youth work although the services provided still remained heavily reliant on volunteers and ‘the philanthropic tradition was incorporated into the social service state which was emerging from the liberal reform programme.’<sup>14</sup> Organised youth movements developed in the late nineteenth century in response to the social and economic problems associated with the urban working-classes.<sup>15</sup> During the first half of the twentieth century the aims of youth movements expanded beyond removing young people away from the moral contamination of the streets, to focus on creating good citizens and to include ‘pragmatic and idealistic desires to deepen young people’s experiences through informal learning and concern for their welfare.’<sup>16</sup>

The most iconic youth movement of the first half of the twentieth century was, arguably, the Boy Scouts founded in 1908. The Scouts and Guides were the most successful of the voluntary organisations working with young people during the interwar period and their cultural influence extended beyond their membership. However, it is also important to remember that only about a sixth of young people aged between 14 and 18 in England

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<sup>12</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth. Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 159; Robert MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 3; Tammy Proctor, *On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2002; Richard G. Kyle, ‘Inside-out: Connecting Indoor and Outdoor Spaces of Informal Education through the Extraordinary Geographies of the Boys’ Brigade Camp’, in Sarah Mills and Peter Kraftl (eds), *Informal Education, Childhood and Youth: Geographies, Histories, Practices*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 22; Sarah Mills, ‘“A Powerful Educational Instrument”: The Woodcraft Folk and Indoor/Outdoor “Nature”, 1925-75’, in Mills and Kraftl (eds), *Informal Education*, p. 65; Paul Wilkinson, ‘English Youth Movements, 1908-30’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 4.2 (1969), pp. 3-23.

<sup>13</sup> Henderick, *Images of Youth*, pp. 177-79.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth: a history of youth in Modern Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p.103.

and Wales belonged to a youth organisation during the period.<sup>17</sup> According to historian Robert MacDonald the Scouting movement lionised the concept of the frontiersman, defending imperialism, ‘masculine power and racial superiority.’ Anxieties about the ill effects of industrialisation made the ‘raw power’ of the frontier seemed attractively pure. The role of the frontiersman, or scout, was not just to push forward the boundaries of civilisation, but to co-opt appealing elements of savagery through costume and songs. Scouting rituals such as the campfire became ‘an emblem of fellowship’ and ‘a dream of male innocence in the woods.’ He adds that the aftermath of the First World War, however, encouraged the movement to distance itself from militarism and focus instead on ‘internationalism and brotherhood for all.’<sup>18</sup> Baden Powell, for example, disliked the Boys’ Brigade’s ‘emphasis on drill and formal religion’, preferring instead to focus on ‘making boys self-sufficient and mentally and physically healthy.’<sup>19</sup>

Tammy Proctor in her research on the Scouting and Guiding movement in the interwar period argues that the movement was significant enough to produce ‘a youth sub-culture that provided important outlets for members.’ These movements inculcated a ‘reconstructed and gendered vision of youth’ which served notions of nationalism and imperialism ‘while at the same time providing opportunities for millions of young people to shape their identities.’ She adds that the impact of the two movements during the interwar period should not be underestimated and they provided ‘a unique space for youth that allowed boys and girls to stretch gender and generational boundaries.’ She further argues that the Scouts and Guides offered a comforting mix of the traditional and modern: drawing on nostalgia for the ‘imperial splendour’ of the nineteenth and contemporary interest in physical culture.<sup>20</sup>

Camping was an important aspect of uniformed youth movements. Historical Geographer Catherine Bannister has shown that Scout and Guide camps were a rite of passage for members as the ‘campsite became a crucible of identity transformation’, through the wearing of uniforms, communal living and ritualised activities within a ‘liminal landscape’ participants absorbed their movements’ culture and experienced ‘identity

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of Empire*, pp. 205-10.

<sup>19</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, pp. 86-7.

<sup>20</sup> Proctor, *On My Honour*, p. 158.

transformation.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Richard G. Kyle has demonstrated how the Boys' Brigade camp was 'a microcosm of the company'. He argues that the camp became a place of metamorphosis as the 'the company camp is an extension of the familiar company' into unfamiliar 'outdoor spaces' and what was experienced by the boys within this context was absorbed into their everyday experience of the organisation 'irrevocably altering it.'<sup>22</sup>

As noted above, during the first quarter of the twentieth century several pacifist woodcraft movements came into existence, which included the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, the Kibbo Kift and the Woodcraft Folk. Less mainstream than the Scouts and Guides and Boys' Brigade, these movements were 'both romantic and utopian' and distanced themselves from the authoritarian and traditionally Christian uniformed organisations such as the Scouts and Guides. The woodcraft movements sought to create 'a more mentally and physically fit society', with their emphasis on open-air and camping activities they sought 'a new religion of the senses' that drew upon a 'heady mixture of natural freedom, romance, and escape.'<sup>23</sup> The Woodcraft Folk, for example focused on 'artistic and cultural practices alongside direct engagement with nature on camp' and used these as an 'educational instrument' to promote their pacifist values. Furthermore, like many British youth movements they 'used futurity as a way to justify their rationale, methods and pedagogical practices.'<sup>24</sup>

Boys' clubs, mentioned briefly here within the wider context of organised youth movements but explored more fully in subsequent chapters, like other youth movements were set up in the late-nineteenth century by philanthropists and religious groups. Where they differed from the uniformed organisations was in their 'less regimented' style and their ability to attract 'difficult to handle older and poorer working-class boys.' Boys' club organisers were cautious to avoid seeming to indoctrinate the working-class boys who attended, offering 'tangible benefits' such as sporting facilities for boxing and gymnastics, camping holidays and 'annual treats.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Catherine Bannister, '“Like a Scout Does...Like a Guide Does...”: The Scout or Guide Camp's Lessons of Identity,' in Mills and Kraftl (eds), *Informal Education*, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> Kyle, 'Inside-out', p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements, 1908-30', *Journal of Contemporary History* 4.2 (1969), p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Mills, 'A Powerful Educational Instrument', p. 75.

<sup>25</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, pp. 87; 91.

All youth movements, regardless to their views on militarism, shared common characteristics. They emphasised the importance of mental and physical fitness for the future generation, and championed physical activities, camping, and engaging with the natural world. There is evidence of a degree of homogeneity across interwar youth movements, or at least the willingness to work towards shared goals. The pacifist Quakers, for instance, were involved in a variety of youth movements, and were happy to participate in youth organisations with military values, through a spirit of ecumenicalism working both with members of other denominations and secular organisations.<sup>26</sup>

Ultimately, youth movements aimed to control the behaviour of their members in order to create good citizens. The adult desire to control youth has a long precedence. Anxieties about the control of young people have been present in British society for the past two-hundred years. Paradoxically, throughout that time young people have been continually recast as ‘simultaneously in need of control but also in need of protection.’<sup>27</sup> They have been at once viewed as ‘vulnerable because not yet fully formed’ and ‘threatening because not yet disciplined by the expectations of adult status.’ Concerns about the unregulated leisure activities of young working-class people ‘detached from traditional forms of moral regulation’ exacerbated fears about their subversive or criminal behaviour. For adults finding it ‘difficult to comprehend the rapidity which society was changing’ the youth problem became ‘a powerful and persisting symbol of uncertainty about the future.’<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Pearson successfully challenged the post-war notion that the interwar period was a time of ‘firm punishment in the courts, going hand-in-hand with little or no crime and an untroubled youth’ by revealing that ‘fears of national decline and cultural adulteration’ causing ‘the nation’s youth’ to reject ‘the standards of their forebears’ were very much present in both periods.<sup>29</sup> The moral panic over youth culture in the 1940s and 50s encouraged the professional development of youth work to gain impetus. Concerns about the regulation of youth in the home, school and workplace called upon youth

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<sup>26</sup> Mark Freeman, ‘Muscular Quakerism? The Society of Friends and youth organisations in Britain, c. 1900-1950’, *English Historical Review* 125.514 (2010), pp. 667-8.

<sup>27</sup> John Muncie and Gordon Hughes, ‘Modes of Youth Governance – Political Rationalities, Criminalisation and resistance,’ in John Muncie, Gordon Hughes, and Eugene McLaughlin (eds), *Youth Justice: Critical Readings*, London: SAGE in association with the Open University, 2002, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*, Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1983, pp. 47-8.



organisations to become ‘spaces of power that framed the bodies of young people in discourses of pleasure, sexuality, health and compliance.’ Young people were encouraged towards ‘self governance’ and youth clubs became the environment where a young person’s ‘capacity for responsible agency could be enhanced through regulated liberty.’<sup>30</sup>

According to Stephen Humphries, in his oral history account of working-class youth culture from the late nineteenth century to the end of the interwar period, working-class youths challenged the middle-class ‘moral entrepreneurs’ who sought to control them and inculcate them with ‘conformist modes of behaviour.’ They did this by developing a ‘cultural tradition’ of resistance through humour, such as ‘larking about’, ‘parody singing’ and ‘practical joking’.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Melanie Tebbutt has pointed out that it is far easier to ‘define the aims of youth movements’ than it is to define the impact they had upon the lives of their members. First-hand accounts of the experiences of members are limited, thus most research has been conducted from the point of view of their founders or organisers. There is some evidence that young people subverted the aims of organisations by ‘larking about’, as suggested by Humphries, but on the whole it was adults who regulated and controlled activities ‘making little attempt to involve members in day-to-day decision making.’<sup>32</sup>

In aiming to regulate youth in order to create good citizens for the nation and empire, youth movements were concerned with the mental and physical fitness of their members. This preoccupation, moreover, was a feature of wider society as can be demonstrated by the contemporary interest in eugenics. Historian Richard Overby has argued that idea of ‘civilisation in crisis’ was highly prevalent in the interwar period and ‘a strong presentiment of impending disaster...touched many areas of public discourse’ including those concerned with eugenics.<sup>33</sup> The theory of eugenics was established by Charles Darwin’s cousin, Sir Francis Galton, in 1883. Galton based his idea on ‘the development of “biometrics”, the statistical measurement of the frequency of genius (or imbecility) in

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<sup>30</sup> Simon Bradford, ‘Managing the Spaces of Freedom: Mid-Twentieth Century Youth Work’, in Mills and Kraftl (eds), *Informal Education*, pp. 192-4.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels: an Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth, 1889-1939*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, pp. 1-27.

<sup>32</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Overby, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization, 1919-1939*, London: Penguin Books, 2010, p. 2.

family pedigrees'. By the beginning of the twentieth century eugenicists were using developments in the theory of genetics to confirm 'their view that the problems of race improvement were biological not social.'<sup>34</sup> There were two main strands to the theory of eugenics, both which could be controlled by social policy. The concept of 'positive eugenics', inspired by animal breeding, rested upon the need for people of 'good stock' to marry and have children. 'Negative eugenics', on the other hand, proposed that the sterilisation of defective people was the best solution to improving and regenerating the nation. Eugenics was also seen as a solution for dealing with Britain's underclass; styled as the unemployable 'social residuum' in the late nineteenth century, or the 'problem group' in the interwar period, (which in turn morphed into the 'problem family' of the post-war period).<sup>35</sup> Eugenics was not simply a niche interest in British society, mainstream writers such as George Bernhard Shaw and H.G. Wells propounded the theory as an antidote to racial degeneration.<sup>36</sup> Other prominent supporters of eugenics included economist John Maynard Keynes, sexologist Havlock Ellis, psychologist Cyril Burt, and the Dean of St Paul's William Inge.<sup>37</sup> However, interest in eugenics reached its zenith in interwar Britain. The campaign arguing for the sterilisation of criminals and the incurably insane began before 1914 and continued into the 1920s. Sterilisation was viewed as a cheaper alternative to breeding 'good stock'. In 1930 the Eugenics Society (founded in 1907) proposed a bill of voluntary sterilisation for 'mental defectives', 'recovered insane' and 'those with serious hereditary diseases'. The bill was rejected by parliament and was perceived by most of the Labour Party as 'sheer class prejudice'. Negative eugenics was far more successful in America, where it was legalised in Indiana in 1907. By the Second World War it was legal in 30 states and almost 42,000 people were deemed defective and compulsorily sterilised.<sup>38</sup> The theory of eugenics was also exported to Germany at the end of the nineteenth century reaching its terrible apotheosis in the policies of the Third Reich. Historian Dan Stone suggests that, furthermore, 'the notion of the "lethal chamber", which had existed in British literature on eugenics since

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.106.

<sup>35</sup> John Welshman, *Underclass: A History of the Excluded Since 1880*, Second Edition, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, Loc. 1412 of 9256 – Loc. 5494 of 9256.

<sup>36</sup> Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002, p. 115.

<sup>37</sup> Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p.106.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 102-25.

the turn of the century’, may have ‘also fed into the fantasies which led to the gas chamber.’<sup>39</sup>

A less drastic solution to improving the physical and mental fitness of the nation was the promotion of physical culture. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has pointed out that during the interwar period ‘the endeavour to build a “superman” was not confined to fascist dictatorships or Britain’s small fascist parties.’<sup>40</sup> She adds that the ‘social imperialism’ that aimed to improve health and fitness levels across the nation, present at the beginning of the twentieth century and compounded by the high rejection rates of army recruits during the First World War, continued to be of great influence during the interwar period. Physical culture was the main focus of this movement; it was popular amongst the working classes as it did not necessarily require expensive equipment. Sports such as boxing, gymnastics and weight-lifting did not require extensive amounts of space and were easily accessible, in urban areas, in local clubs. Physical culture was not just confined to the male population, and many women got involved during the interwar period. She concludes that the British people did not need to turn to fascism in order to engage in physical culture. ‘Keeping-fit’ could be a patriotic pastime that encouraged ‘national and racial regeneration’, but its inspiration came from the ‘imperial manliness of the late nineteenth century’ rather than militaristic fascist movements at home or overseas. The National Fitness Campaign launched in 1937, for example, actively ‘spurned an identification with militarism and emphasized the importance of voluntary participation as more in tune with national character.’<sup>41</sup>

The exploration of youth movements, the control of youth, eugenics and physical culture in the interwar period provide an important context for the issues explored in this thesis. Research into police-led boys’ clubs can further address concepts of militarism, manliness, imperialism and gender identity revealed in the history of the Scouting. The significance of camping, an activity engaged in by the majority of youth organisations, and the role of natural world in inculcating notions of good citizenship, is also revealed by research into police club camps. The wider issue of the control of youth is addressed

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<sup>39</sup> Stone, *Breeding Superman*, p. 115.

<sup>40</sup> Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 41.4 (2006), p. 595.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 596-609.

by the study in analysing the aims and motivations of police club founders. The eugenicists' preoccupation with racial regeneration provides context to how the police-led club's framed their narrative about the regeneration of working-class youth. Finally, the interwar obsession with physical culture is scrutinised by exploring the role of masculinity and physicality in police-led clubs.

### **A note on primary sources**

Between April 2009 and May 2011 I worked at Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Museum and Archives as an Education Officer. The post was created by funding from the UK Home Office's Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP). TKAP ran in England and Wales from 2008-2011 and aimed to reduce serious violence involving 13 to 24-year-olds using a range of 'enforcement, education and prevention' initiatives.<sup>42</sup> The main aim of my role was to use heritage to reach out to young people in different communities in Greater Manchester and, using my background in teaching, to break down barriers between them and police officers at GMP. I did this by giving presentations in school, along-side police officers, I wrote resources for teachers, and hosted various tours and workshops within the museum building. My job ended in 2011 when TKAP funding was no longer available. This thesis is inspired by the complete archive of a short-lived boys' club, run by police officers in Manchester between 1937 and 1942, held at the museum. Initial investigations revealed numerous other boys' clubs that had been run by police officers in England and Wales, particularly between the two World Wars, which forms the basis of this research. As the inspiration for this thesis came within the context of a role that used heritage to engage young people, and influence their relationships with the police, it is a natural progression to attempt to use the historical research to inform current youth justice policy. A point that is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

Research into police-led clubs utilises a wide range of primary source material including: annual reports, photographs, local and national newspapers, meeting minutes, police personnel files, personal letters, accounts and journal articles, monographs and official reports authored by contemporary cultural commentators. Moreover, it makes use of archives that have not been fully explored by historians before. In particular this research

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<sup>42</sup> Liz Ward et al, *An Assessment of the Tackling Knives and Serious Youth Violence Action Programme (TKAP) – Phase II* (Research Report 53, Home Office, London, 2011).

includes the complete archive of Manchester City Police Lads' Club at GMP Museum and Archives that has not been studied before, and the extensive collection at Norfolk Record Office relating to Norwich Lads' Club, which has so far only been utilised by local historians. The primary sources are dominated by the clubs at Manchester and Norwich and to some extent Hyde Lads' Club and Hull City Police Lads' Club. Insights have also been garnered from a small number of items relating to boys' clubs at Lancaster and Swansea.

The only complete club archive available is that of Manchester and it includes an extensive collection of photographs, annual reports, meeting minutes and press cuttings kept by the club's founder Superintendent Alexander Aberdein. The most useful items include three annual reports for 1938-41, 19 pages of press cuttings collected by Aberdein, and 170 pages of meeting minutes covering the period 1937-1940. The material relating to Norwich Lads' Club, held at Norfolk Record Office, forms an extensive yet incomplete archive of the club. A significant drawback of this archive is that there is a lack of material detailing club undertakings before 1943 as a fire on club premises destroyed much of it. The most useful sources from this archive include a letter from an 'old boy', the card index of donations and subscriptions to the club and a collection of photograph slides from the 1930s. The story of the club at Norwich is most easily gleaned from newspaper articles in national papers and the *Police Review* and Dain's own publication, *Police Welfare Work Among Boys*. The history of the rest of the clubs is drawn from a limited pool of sources. Regarding the club at Hyde, an evocative photograph album remains extant and there are a substantial number of newspaper articles from the Hull *Daily Mail* available online. Aside from that there is the odd annual report for Hyde and Swansea, but generally the rest of the bulk of the material detailing the police-led clubs can be found in newspaper articles taken from national papers such as the *Times*, *Guardian* and *Observer*, and some local papers and specialist publications such as the *Police Review*. Finally, to best understand the role of the police-led boys' club and address the central question of this thesis, it has been necessary to place them within the broader boys' club movement. An invaluable primary source for boys' clubs in the interwar period are the publications by the National Association of Boys' Clubs (NABC) who produced annual reports, handbooks and a journal named *The Boy*. Further printed

primary sources detailing the history of the boys' club movement can be broadly divided into the categories of academic studies, official publications and memoirs.

As the institutional and media primary material is likely prone to present the boys' clubs in a purely positive light, it is important to interrogate and problematize these sources within the context of secondary literature on youth movements, control, and physical culture, highlighted in the previous section. A close reading of the primary sources will reveal the preoccupations of the interwar and immediate post-war period. As noted in the previous section a prevalent narrative of the interwar period was the idea of 'civilization in crisis' and it is fascinating to investigate if this concept can be detected in the source material relating to boys' clubs.<sup>43</sup> If this is the case, the sources will be interrogated with reference to how the clubs sought to tackle perceived national decline. Moreover, analysis of institutional and media sources will reveal whether unregulated young people were viewed as vulnerable or as a threat and if the clubs aimed to control the leisure activities of members accordingly.

Finally, it is useful to outline the chronology of the research area. The primary source material available so far provides documentation ranging from 1918 (when Norwich Lads' Club was established) and continuing into the 1970s. Sixty years is too long a time for a detailed analytical study to be carried out so this thesis focuses upon the interwar period and the immediate post-war period, for example 1918-1951. There are several reasons for fixing upon this particular timescale. The start date of 1918 marks the beginning of the interwar period and the founding, as the primary source material currently indicates, of the first police-led boys' club: the finish date marks the end of Clement Attlee's Labour Government and provides enough time after the Second World War to chart any changes in youth justice, policing methods, working-class and middle-class cultures, youth culture and attitudes towards citizenship and masculinity and physicality. Moreover 1918-1951 has been recognised by social historians as a distinct period: see for example Ross McKibbin's work on classes and cultures and Selina Todd's investigation into the lives of working-class youths.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918-51*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; Selina Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents: Working-Class Young People in England, 1918-1955', *International Review of Social History* 52.1 (2007), pp. 57-87.

## **Research aims**

The thesis can roughly be divided into two. The first half concerns the location of the police-led clubs both in the literal, physical sense and in a more abstract sense; for example, the geographical distribution and spread of the clubs is considered alongside their position within working-class and middle-class cultures. The second half of the thesis is dominated by concepts of masculinity or masculinities. The theme of masculinity in the police-led clubs is addressed directly and then expanded within the context of camping and modern youth justice. With regards to chapter structure usually first the historiography relevant to the research question is explored, then the context is established by looking at the nationwide boys' club movement as a whole, before directly addressing the example of the police-led boys' club.

Chapter Two gives an overview of police-led boys' clubs within the context of the period under scrutiny by establishing their geographical distribution and introducing key characters in the boys' club movement alongside the most significant figures involved in the police clubs. In addition, the history of local and national newspapers is briefly explored in conjunction with how the reception of police-led clubs can be traced through newspaper reports; and the vision of police-led club founders is introduced and compared with that of the NABC especially with regards to citizenship and juvenile delinquency. Chapter Three explores the role of the police-led boys' club in the working-class community by examining how local in nature police-led boys' clubs really were. It focuses in particular on the working-class police officers who ran club activities on a daily basis, and investigates what motivated them to volunteer considerable amounts of their spare time to the club cause. Moreover, it looks at how the clubs were used to directly combat juvenile delinquency locally, and what the overall role of the clubs was in the working-class community. Chapter Four investigates the relationship between the police clubs and middle-class cultures and whether they were a means for middle-class people to intervene in the lives of the working class. It considers how middle-class the high-ranking officers who founded the clubs were, how the clubs were managed and funded, the role of doctors and dentists within them and in what ways the clubs were endorsed by royals and members of the peerage. Chapter Five focuses on masculinity and physicality in the police clubs by investigating the popularity of the range of sports and physical pursuits that were on offer, in what ways the concept of 'manliness' was promoted, why

club organisers encouraged friendship between club members and the police officers who ran the day-to-day activities, how the clubs aimed to prepare the boys for the world of work, and in what ways the use of masculinity and physicality in the clubs promoted citizenship and nation-building. Chapter Six expands the theme of masculinity and physicality by exploring the role of camping within the clubs and by looking at how character-building and friendship was encouraged in camp, the vision of camp organisers and the role of nature in the camp experience. Finally, Chapter Seven touches upon criminology where the example of the police-led boys' club is used as a comparison and a contrast to modern approaches to youth justice comparing two Chief Constables concerned with youth crime separated by eighty years, and by demonstrating how important elements of the police-led boys' club movement relate directly to the UK government's Serious Violence Strategy on youth crime. It examines what can be taken from the police-led boys' club movement as useful today, while sounding a note of caution.

The themes that dominate the thesis are those of juvenile delinquency, masculinity and citizenship, and in exploring the ways in which these themes relate to one another directly addresses the central question of: 'Were police-led boys' clubs a phenomenon in their own right?', as they reveal to what extent the police-led clubs conformed to the clubs found in the wider boys' club movement. Moreover, regardless of whether the answer is 'yes' or 'no', either answer is significant as it comments upon the position of the police within civil society in the first half of the twentieth century.



## **Chapter Two: Police-led boys' clubs and their national impact**

### **Introduction**

This second chapter seeks to establish an overview of police-led boys' clubs in the interwar and immediate post-war period by locating them historically and geographically, while placing them within the context of the nationwide boys' club movement (as represented most frequently by the National Association of Boys' Clubs). Firstly, the historical context and geographical distribution of the clubs is established by: introducing key contemporary commentators on the boys' club movement alongside the characters central to the police-led clubs; giving a brief historical overview of the nationwide boys' club movement of the period; and detailing the geographical distribution of the police-led clubs and providing context to their urban locations by outlining population, employment and household data. Secondly, a brief outline of the history of newspaper distribution in the period under investigation is given, as newspapers provide a central source for charting the story of the police-led club. Thirdly, the portrayal of the police clubs by local and national papers are investigated with regards to their role as local activity centres and claims made about their ability to prevent crime. Fourthly, the vision of police-led club founders together with the vision behind the boys' club movement is addressed with special attention given to the role of citizenship. Finally, attitudes within the boys' club movement as a whole towards juvenile delinquency, and its causes and prevention is examined, alongside how police-led clubs sought to deal directly with juvenile crime.

### **The historical context and geographical distribution of police boys' clubs**

In order to address the historical context and geographical distribution of police-led clubs it is helpful to introduce the key personalities that are referenced throughout this study, both from the wider boys' club movement as a whole and from police-led boys' clubs; cover the geographical and urban context noted above; and give a brief overview of the clubs themselves.

Three major figures that were involved with or commented at length upon the boys' club movement, whose work has been extensively drawn upon in this thesis, were Hubert Llewellyn Smith, Basil Henriques and Arthur Eustace Morgan. Hubert Llewellyn Smith (1864-1945) was a civil servant and social investigator and came from a middle-class Quaker background. At the end of the nineteenth century he was working as one of

Charles Booth's team of researchers surveying working-class living conditions and urban poverty. By 1897 he was controller general of the Board of Trade and was appointed Chief Economic Adviser of His Majesty's government in 1919. In the 1930s he compiled the sequel to Booth's work, the nine volume *New Survey of London Life and Labour*. From 1935-1943 Llewellyn Smith was chairman of the National Association of Boys' Clubs (NABC). For many years he worked on a history of the East End of London which was published in 1939.<sup>45</sup> Also preoccupied with the East End was Basil Henriques (1890-1961) who came from a wealthy liberal Jewish background. His father owned an import and export company and was able to provide his son with an income from financial investments throughout his life, allowing him to be a gentleman of independent means. His principal occupations included working as a boys' club leader, magistrate and writer. He founded the Oxford and St George's Club for Jewish boys in the East End of London in 1914 and was elected the chairman of the East London juvenile court in 1936. He served as a magistrate in the area until his retirement in 1955.<sup>46</sup> Finally, Arthur Eustace Morgan (1886-1972) was a professor of English who throughout the interwar period taught in universities in Britain, America and Canada. 'In 1938 he was commissioned by the King George's Jubilee Trust to survey the whole field of adolescent activities' and 'developments of the national policy in youth' were made based on his recommendations.<sup>47</sup> Without doubt there were many more important figures connected to the boys' club movement within the interwar and immediate post-war period, however these represent a cross-section of archetypes. Llewellyn Smith was an economist specialising in the problems of the urban poor, Henriques a philanthropist and magistrate and Morgan a university academic focusing upon youths. All three positions of expertise are indicative of the major preoccupations of the boys' club movement that aimed to remove youths from the dangers of urban squalor, including the threat of descent into juvenile delinquency, alongside a strong belief in their ability to successfully carry out their aims if only their approach was systematic enough.

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<sup>45</sup> Roger Davidson, 'Smith, Sir Hubert Llewellyn (1864-1945)', <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed 27 January 2018.

<sup>46</sup> 'Henriques, Sir Basil Lucas Quixano (1890-1961)', <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed 27 January 2018.

<sup>47</sup> A. E. Morgan, *Young Citizen*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943, p. 2.

By far the two most significant characters within the police-led boys' club movement within the context of this study were John Henry Dain, who founded Norwich Lads' Club in 1918, and Alexander Aberdein, founder of Manchester City Police Lads' Club in 1937. John Henry Dain (1874-1956) began his career as a Constable at Bridlington in 1898; he moved forces several times to gain promotion first to Hyde in c. 1901, where he was promoted to Sergeant at some point, before joining Devonport in 1908, where he became Chief Inspector in 1912; he was then appointed Chief Constable of Canterbury in 1913 and left in 1918 to become Chief Constable of Norwich where he stayed until his retirement in 1943.<sup>48</sup> Dain gained a high profile amongst Chief Constables being elected as honourable auditor of the Chief Constables Association in 1924 and vice-president in 1927.<sup>49</sup> In 1934 he was appointed as a serving brother in the Order of St. John, the royal order of chivalry first constituted by a royal charter from Queen Victoria in 1888.<sup>50</sup> Alexander Aberdein (1896-1947), on the other hand, began his working life as a sheet-metal worker in his native Scotland. In 1920 he joined Manchester City Police as a Constable and was promoted to Sergeant in 1927, Inspector in 1931, Superintendent in 1934, Chief Superintendent in 1943, and, moved forces, to be appointed Chief Constable of Salford shortly before his sudden death in 1947.<sup>51</sup> Both figures are important to the story of police-led boys' club in different ways. Dain appears to have been the principal mover within the police-led boys' club movement: his club and related publications inspiring the formation of other police clubs. The personality of Aberdein on the other hand, can be discerned through the best preserved police lads' club archive. The archive which includes annual reports, meeting minutes and a book of press cuttings compiled by Aberdein himself, reveals not only his explicit aims in founding a club, for example to tackle personally the problem of juvenile delinquency, but unspoken motivations, such as the way he cited his work with the club when seeking promotion.

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<sup>48</sup> Robert Walker, *Seventy Years Young: A History of the Norwich Lads Club 1918-1988*, Norwich: Alpha Press, 1990, pp. 5-7, 25, 38.

<sup>49</sup> 'Chief Constables' Conference', *The Times*, 6 June 1924, p. 11; 'Police Services in the Strike', *The Times*, 4 June 1926, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> 'Order of St. John of Jerusalem', *The Times*, 3 January 1934, p. 13; 'About Us', St John International, at <http://orderofstjohn.ritdns.com/about-us>, accessed 23 April 2016.

<sup>51</sup> GMPMA, 'A' Box Alexander Aberdein, Aberdein, Application with a Copy of Testimonials, p. 2; GMPMA, 'A' Box Alexander Aberdein, Isobel Aberdein, Newspaper Clippings Ref the Career of Supt. & Ch. Con. A. Aberdein 1930s-1950s, pp. 30-40.

Having introduced the key personalities within this study it is helpful to place them within the context of the boys' club movement before turning specifically to police-led clubs. The boys' club movement had its origins in the nineteenth century when many clubs were founded across England and Wales. In Manchester and Salford, for instance, in the late 1880s, clubs were established in response to the 'scuttling' phenomenon, hoping to give juvenile delinquents involved in gang warfare an alternative positive outlet for their 'high spirits'. By 1908 there were 31 clubs in the area alone.<sup>52</sup> By the interwar period 'the boys' club movement entered a period of unprecedented growth, which was further augmented by the establishment of the National Association of Boys' Clubs (NABC) in 1925.'<sup>53</sup> . The publications of the NABC, particularly their quarterly journal *The Boy* and annual reports, provide a fascinating summary of the preoccupations of the boys' club movement during the period. *The Boy*, to which both Llewellyn Smith and Henriques were regular contributors, covered a wide range of topics including delinquency, unemployment, juvenile courts, character-building, class consciousness, camping, migration, health and fitness, religion and citizenship.<sup>54</sup> Their annual reports listed all the clubs affiliated with the NABC giving a yearly snapshot of the national boys' club movement and providing information about name, location, membership numbers and leading officers. By the outbreak of the Second World War, as Morgan revealed in his wartime survey of youth, there were over 1,400 clubs affiliated with the NABC, with roughly 80,000 boys in attendance. Clubs were to be found predominantly in industrial urban areas: there were, for example, 111 clubs in Liverpool, 86 in Birmingham, and 29 in Manchester, whereas only two clubs existed in Suffolk and just one in Cornwall. Clubs varied in size from one room to large specially built premises. Most clubs offered a variety of indoor and outdoor activities including athletics, boxing, gymnastics, indoor games, reading and crafts.<sup>55</sup>

With regards to the police-led boys' clubs, as has been established in the introduction, almost no academic research has been done into such clubs. This study has revealed the existence of at least 15 police-led clubs. Boys' clubs were founded by Chief Constables

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<sup>52</sup> P. Gooderson, 'Terror on the Streets of late Victorian Salford and Manchester: the Scuttling Menace', *Manchester Region History Review* 11 (1997), pp. 8-9.

<sup>53</sup> Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012, p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> *The Boy: A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys*, various issues 1925-1945.

<sup>55</sup> A. E. Morgan, *Young Citizen*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943, pp. 102-106.

in Rochester in 1903, Norwich by Dain in 1918, Hyde by J. W. Danby in 1928, Lancaster by C.E. Harris in 1929, Congleton by G.S. Lowe in 1932, Swansea by F.J. May in 1933, and in Hull by T. Wells in 1943. Former Chief Constables founded clubs at Scarborough in 1922 and at Hereford sometime during the interwar period. At this time, Chief Constables were also involved in clubs at Canterbury and Huddersfield.<sup>56</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club was founded in 1937 by Superintendent Alexander Aberdein and former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Phillip Game founded a club in Croydon in 1947.<sup>57</sup>

The police-led clubs that feature most heavily in this study are Norwich Lads' Club, Hyde Lads' Club, Lancaster Boys' Club, Swansea Boys' Club, Manchester City Police Lads' Club and Hull Police Boys' Club. The club at Norwich still exists in a much reduced form as Norwich Lads' Amateur Boxing Club; Hyde was closed in 1993; Lancaster is now Lancaster Boys & Girls Club; Swansea closed its doors over ten years ago leaving its imposing purpose-built club building situated on a hill above the town centre derelict; short-lived Manchester closed in 1942; and the Hull club was known until recently as Humberside Police Boys' Club, the police withdrew funding in 2008, and in 2010 having previously focused on boxing, it morphed into a table tennis club.<sup>58</sup> Hull was unusual in still receiving police funding in the new millennium as police involvement in most of the clubs petered out in the 1960s and 70s. Lancaster, for example, merged with the Red Rose Boys' Club in 1963. At Norwich, retired police Superintendent Edgar Dain (nephew of founder John Henry Dain) appointed as the club's paid youth worker in 1958, was replaced by a trained youth worker salaried by Norfolk County Council in 1975, severing

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<sup>56</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 251-257; Robert Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, p. 3; 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club', *The Times*, 6 October 1928, p. 9; 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979', p. 2; 'Police Friends of York', *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, 15 January 1932, p. 35; John Barber, 'Straight and True; 'Police Fit Out Three Boys' Clubs', *The Observer*, 5 December 1943, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Doody, *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes*; Louise with Angela, *Policing youth*, pp. 24-25; Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 150.

<sup>58</sup> 'History of Norwich Lads Amateur Boxing Club', at <https://www.norwichladsabc/history-norwich-lads-amateurboxing-club.htm>, accessed 25 May 2018; 'Hyde Lads' Club', at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=131-dd346&cid=-1#-1>, accessed 25 May 2018; 'About Us', Lancaster Boys' & Girls' Club, at [http://lancasterboysandgirlsclub.or.uk/more\\_info.asp?current\\_id=97](http://lancasterboysandgirlsclub.or.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=97), accessed 25 May 2018; 'Swansea Boys' Club be transformed under new plans', at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-34083103>, accessed 25 May 2018; 'Boxing gives way to table tennis at club', at <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/boxing-gives-way-to-table-tennis-at-club-1>, accessed 25 May 2018.

its final link with the police.<sup>59</sup> Finally, offered as a comparison, Salford Lads' Club also features in this study. It is perhaps one of the UK's most famous clubs due to its connection with The Smiths. The club was founded in 1903, by the Brewery owners the Groves Brothers, and purpose built by architect Henry Lord. The building is listed as it is considered to be the best example in Britain of a pre-First World War Club to have survived.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979: Lancaster Boys Club Golden Jubilee 1929-1979 Souvenir Brochure', Lancaster Boys and Girls Club, at [http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more\\_info.asp?current\\_id=307](http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=307), accessed 26 February 2015; Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, pp. 41, 51.

<sup>60</sup> 'Salford Lads' Club History', at <https://salfordladsclub.org.uk/about/history/>, accessed 23 June 2016.

**Map 1.1 the geographical distribution of known police-led boys' clubs**



Source: Adapted from 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', d-maps.com free maps, at [http://www.d-maps.com/carte.php?num\\_car=2555&lang=en](http://www.d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=2555&lang=en), accessed 2 July 2016.

The distribution of police-led clubs shows a concentration in the central belt of the industrial north, and a number of clubs situated near the coast. The towns and cities where they were located were usually heavily industrial in nature or ports. During the 1920s and 30s the boys' club movement was at its strongest in industrial areas such as 'Lancashire and Cheshire (Liverpool, Manchester, Birkenhead, Burnley and Salford), London, Birmingham, Nottingham and Middlesbrough.'<sup>61</sup> The distribution of the police-led clubs was similar if not quite identical to this trend.

**Table 1.1 population, employment and household data for the major cities concerned in this study**

Location	Average population 1931-51	Average percentage <sup>62</sup> of population are males aged 15-19 <sup>63</sup> , 1931-51	Average percentage of population employed in industry <sup>64</sup> 1931-51	Industry with largest number of employees	Average percentage of unemployed males of working age 1931 only	Percentage of households without WC in 1951 only
Norwich	112,683	3% (3,786)	45% (50,627)	Services (20,558)	12% (4,228)	10% (2,532)
Manchester	721,492	4% (25,312)	49% (353,859)	Services (143,376)	17% (42,810)	10% (20,605)
Lancaster	93,167	3% (2,989)	42% (38,878)	Services (17,145)	6% (1,667)	14% (4,337)
Swansea	205,202	4% (7,628)	40% (81,640)	Services (29,999)	22% (15,317)	25% (14,818)
Hull	302,135	4% (11,394)	41% (123,727)	Services (47,693)	15% (15,727)	6% (5,229)
Salford	318,434	4% (11,676)	49% (154,558)	Manufacture (57,935)	16% (16,455)	9% (8122)

Source: 'Great Britain Historical Geographical System', at <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>, accessed 1 July 2016.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 81.

<sup>62</sup> Rounded up to the nearest whole number.

<sup>63</sup> Actual number in brackets.

<sup>64</sup> Consisting of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, utilities and services.

<sup>65</sup> GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Norwich District through time | Population Statistics | Total Population, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at

[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/TOT\\_POP](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/TOT_POP); Redistricted Age & Sex Structure, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at

[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/AGESEX\\_85UP](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/AGESEX_85UP); Industry Statistics | Total employed in all industries, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at

[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/INDUSTRY\\_TOT](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/INDUSTRY_TOT); Standardised Industry Data, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at

[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/INDUSTRY\\_GEN](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/INDUSTRY_GEN); Work & Poverty Statistics | Census Unemployment by Sex, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at



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[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/CENSUS\\_UNEM](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/CENSUS_UNEM); Housing Statistics | Housing Amenity, redistributed, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at  
[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/HOUS\\_AMENITY\\_GEN](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168697/cube/HOUS_AMENITY_GEN); Manchester District through time | Population Statistics | Total Population, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at  
[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10033007/cube/TOT\\_POP](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10033007/cube/TOT_POP); Redistricted Age & Sex Structure, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at  
[http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10033007/cube/AGESEX\\_85UP](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10033007/cube/AGESEX_85UP); Industry Statistics | Total employed in all industries, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at  
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Using the University of Portsmouth's online resource 'Great Britain Historical Geographical System' (GBHGIS) it is possible to build up a picture of each of the towns and cities focused upon in this study. All the cities in the table had police-led boys' clubs and are the ones most often referred to in this study, apart from Salford, home to one of the nation's most famous boys' club, which has been included in order to provide a comparison. The population sizes of the cities varied, but they were comparable in other ways. The percentage of the population consisting of boys aged 15-19, the age group that would have attended the clubs, was three or four percent in all cases. The number of people (of both sexes) employed in industry was in a range of 40-49%. However, the table also shows evidence of changing times as, apart from Salford, the biggest employment sector in all the cities was 'services' rather than manufacturing which shows that although manufacturing was central to the British economy at the time, this was not necessarily reflected in employment, particularly in centres like Manchester which had always acted as the service points for a surrounding more industrial district. Average unemployment in 1931, which saw the highest levels of unemployment for males of working age during the period, was comparable in Manchester, Hull and Salford at 17%, 15%, and 16% respectively. Norwich was not far off this with unemployment at 12%, but Lancaster had the slowest rate, in comparison with the others, at just 6%. Swansea had the highest level of unemployment at 22%, indicating that it was the most poverty-stricken of the cities, which is further evidenced by the high number of households without a WC, at 25%, a good 10-15% higher than the other cities, which in comparison had relatively similar levels of amenities. Although the British economy began to grow during the interwar period, particularly in the Midlands and south coast areas, the police-led boys' clubs were situated in towns and cities in less dynamic regions with living standards more or less comparable with one another.

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*Vision of Britain through Time*, at [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/INDUSTRY\\_GEN](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/INDUSTRY_GEN); Work & Poverty Statistics | Census Unemployment by Sex, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/CENSUS\\_UNEM](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/CENSUS_UNEM); Housing Statistics | Housing Amenity, redistricted, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, at [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/HOUS\\_AMENITY\\_GEN](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10057073/cube/HOUS_AMENITY_GEN), accessed 1 July 2016.

N.B.: Average percentages in the table are rounded up to the nearest whole number, the actual number is presented in brackets; the term 'industry' includes agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, utilities and services.

## Newspapers

As set out in the introduction, newspapers play a central role in the primary source material relating to police-led boys' clubs and it is fascinating to analyse how the clubs were portrayed by the press. Moreover, the circulation and ubiquity of newspapers in the first half of the twentieth century make them an ideal source for identifying the motivation behind establishing police-led boys' clubs and their relationship with juvenile delinquency and youth justice. Before turning to the newspaper reports in question, however, it is useful to establish their context and value as a historical resource.

Historian Lucy Brown has provided an overview of the development and spread of popular national and provincial newspapers from the late nineteenth into the twentieth century. She establishes that at the beginning of the twentieth century cheap newspaper publications provided regular entertainment for the masses. By the second part of the nineteenth century the newspaper had become established as part of normal daily life for all classes.<sup>66</sup> Improvements in technology such as the introduction of the steam-powered printing press and the production of cheap paper led to a revolution in newspaper production in the late nineteenth century. By 1880 the *Daily Telegraph* was circulating 250,000 copies daily; many national and provincial newspapers had a circulation of over 100,000 per day and by 1900 the *Daily Mail* had approached a circulation of almost one million.<sup>67</sup> The provincial penny dailies grew in circulation and numbers after the mid-nineteenth century. The *Manchester Guardian*, for example, reduced in price from 2d to 1d in 1858 increasing its circulation to 23,000, then 30,000 in 1870 and 43,000 by 1900. Moreover, by receiving telegraphed news local presses could bring out breakfast-time editions before the London papers could physically arrive, effectively limiting the capital's press's circulation areas and stemming their political domination.<sup>68</sup> The towns and cities that were home to the police-led clubs detailed above all had thriving local newspapers.

The proliferation of local, regional and national papers during this period provides an invaluable resource for historians especially considering that more and more papers are

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<sup>66</sup> Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 273.

<sup>67</sup> John Cannon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to British History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 680.

<sup>68</sup> Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, p. 32.

being digitised and made available and easily accessible online. Social and cultural historian Adrian Bingham has argued effectively for ‘the value of the popular press as a historical source’.<sup>69</sup> He depicts newspapers as an invaluable ‘way of exploring the representations and narratives that circulated throughout society’; although he warns that historians must be mindful of not just focusing on the content in order to gain political, social or cultural insights, but must place popular newspapers ‘in their proper historical context and understand how they were produced and received.’<sup>70</sup> For example, he reveals that for many people during the interwar period the daily habit of reading a newspaper ‘was a new one’, and the popular papers of the day emphasised the ‘importance of citizenship’ and focused upon ‘living standards and the concerns of everyday life.’<sup>71</sup> He maintains that especially popular in the twentieth century were stories that focused on the personal and tales of ‘human interest’.<sup>72</sup> Such stories of human interest included accounts of sporting success. In addition, historian Matthew Taylor has revealed that boxing ‘spectaculars’, both their ‘build up’ and ‘outcome’ were ‘meticulously detailed’ in the ‘national’ ‘popular press’ during the interwar period.<sup>73</sup> As will be revealed, boys’ clubs including those led by the police also championed the importance of citizenship and they generated stories of human interest when members achieved recognition through sporting activities such as boxing.

The actual publications that best shed light upon police-led boys’ clubs include broadsheets, such as *The Times*, popular press publications, such as the *Daily Express*, local newspapers such as the *Hull Daily Mail*, and specialist publications, like the *Police Review* and the NABC’s *The Boy*. It is interesting to consider how the clubs were portrayed by articles within these publications and it is possible to explore the ‘vision’ behind the clubs and investigate their relationship with juvenile delinquency and youth justice. The club with which it is easiest to do this is Manchester City Police Lads’ Club, founded by Superintendent Alexander Aberdein in 1937. The press cuttings that he

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<sup>69</sup> Adrian Bingham, ‘Reading Newspapers: Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain’, *History Compass* 10.2 (2012), p. 140.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pp. 142 and 145.

<sup>71</sup> Adrian Bingham, “‘An Organ of Uplift?’ The popular press and political culture in interwar Britain’, *Journalism Studies* 14.5 (2013), pp. 651-662.

<sup>72</sup> Adrian Bingham, ‘Newspaper Problem Pages and British Sexual Culture Since 1918’, *Media History* 18.1 (2012), p. 51.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew Taylor, ‘Round the London Ring: Boxing, Class and Community in Interwar London’, *The London Journal* 34.2 (2009), p. 156.

collected from 1937-1942 reveal that the club gained press coverage locally, throughout the north, and nationally. Local papers that reported on the club included the *Evening News*, *Gorton and Openshaw Reporter*, and the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. News of the club was more widely disseminated through ‘the national newspaper of the north’ the *Daily Dispatch*. National coverage was achieved through the *Daily Express*, *Daily Herald*, *Police Review* and *Police Chronicle and Constabulary World*.<sup>74</sup> Also the *Manchester Guardian* carried articles about the club; in the 1930s it was mainly a local paper, deriving most of its advertising revenue from the north-west, although its circulation was beginning to grow beyond the area garnering a national reach.<sup>75</sup> Images of other police-led clubs can be pieced together, albeit fragmentarily in some cases, from a wide range of newspapers, for example there are references to the clubs at Norwich, Hyde and Hull in both *The Times* and *The Observer* national newspapers. The *Hull Daily Mail* is the source of over 30 reports that provide an excellent overview of the activities and status of Hull City Police Boys’ Club and accounts of the clubs at Lancaster and Swansea can be found respectively in the *Lancaster Daily Post* and (Swansea) *Evening Post*.

Thus during the period under investigation, newspapers, both locally and nationally, had a wide circulation and were cheap enough to be easily available to all classes of people to the extent that they were read on a daily basis. People enjoyed reading stories of ‘human interest’ that they could identify with and it was possible to follow fortunes of police-led boys’ club for those readers who were interested.

### **The portrayal of police-led boys’ club by the popular press**

Using the evidence generated by local and national newspapers and specialist journals and magazines it is interesting to examine how police-led clubs were portrayed by the press. Indeed, newspaper and magazine articles may have been instrumental in spreading the police-led clubs. By examining the portrayal in the press of the clubs at Hyde, Hull, Manchester, and Norwich and, for comparison, Salford it is possible to speculate how the

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<sup>74</sup> GMPMA, Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Papers, Alexander Aberdein, Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Press Cuttings, 1937-1942, pp. 1-18.

<sup>75</sup> Geoffrey Taylor, *Changing Faces: a history of the Guardian 1956-88*, London, Forth Estate, 1993, pp 8-11.

clubs may have been received locally as activity centres and as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency.

With regard to the clubs as local activity centres, their opening nights were often extensively reported upon, giving a snapshot of what the clubs had to offer. An extensive report in *The Times* on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1928 detailed the opening night of Hyde boys' club describing it as a 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club'. The number of boys enrolling was emphasised, in this case over 100 'in half an hour', and activities on offer such as singing, books, drafts, dominoes, bagatelle and physical drill. The boys were portrayed as enthusiastic when Danby 'read out the club motto... "Live pure; speak true; right wrong; honour the King,"' the boys were reported as having 'accepted it with a chorus that rang to the roof.' Enthusiasm for the club locally was evoked by the image of crowds 'in the main street' stopping to listen to 'the singing of "John Peel" by over 100 voices.'<sup>76</sup>

The opening of the police lads' clubs, on three separate sites, at Hull was similarly reported in *The Observer* on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1943, which boasted that: 'Already 350 boys have been enrolled, and there are waiting lists of the boys who want to do physical training, and vocational training such as woodwork, radio, electrical and motor engineering, French polishing and draughtsmanship,' adding that the police had provided canteens and 'not only fitted out the club handsomely but secured first-class instructors.'<sup>77</sup> Such 'vocational training' was used to prepare boys for the world of work, a point that is discussed further in Chapter Five of this thesis.

Although there do not seem to be any extant accounts of the opening of Manchester City Police Lads' Club, it featured in the press many times in its relatively short life. During its first year both the *Daily Dispatch* and the *Police Review* highlighted the novelty of a club held inside a police station. The *Gorton and Openshaw Reporter* described the club as 'modern' with 'up-to-date' equipment and a 'fine programme' and emphasised the physical activities on offer there. The club's success with boxing was quoted throughout press coverage, with the *Gorton and Openshaw Reporter* reporting on a boxing tournament at the club on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1938, the *Daily Herald* on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1938, and *The Reporter* again on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1939. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1938 the *Manchester Guardian*

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<sup>76</sup> 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club', *The Times*, 6 October 1928, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> 'Police Fit Out Three Boys' Clubs', *The Observer*, 5 December 1943, p. 5.

named the club a 'thorough-going success' as it had 'produced a finalist in the East Lancashire light-weight boxing championship.' Similarly, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1939 the *Daily Herald* said the club had 'more than justified its existence' because of its success in boxing and on the same day the *Daily Dispatch* included a photograph of boys boxing captioned 'several promising boxers have been produced since the club was formed in 1937.'<sup>78</sup>

Physical activities were also emphasised in a *Lancashire Evening Post* article about a display night at Lancaster Boys' Club which stated: 'in the space of two years' the club with 650 members had developed into a 'live centre of healthy recreation and sporting enjoyment for the youth of the town in a manner which no other organisation locally can claim.' On this particular occasion 'the club headquarters were humming with excitement' waiting for the 'annual display of gymnast, physical training and boxing sections.' The physical training display was directed by a Police Constable. The Chief Constable also attending the evening and made an appeal for 'greater financial support' so that they could expand their offer to include 'open-air game facilities' for 'cricket and football' and an 'open-air swimming bath.'<sup>79</sup>

Returning to Hull, the city's *Daily Mail* regularly charted the activities of the three police clubs. On December 28<sup>th</sup> 1943 it reported on their first Christmas party where 'about 150 youngsters' belonging to the St. Paul Street branch, 'had great fun'. Entertainments included 'community singing', a 'singing competition', 'film', and 'a feast of cakes', and the party was organised 'by Insp. Walton (club leader), Special Insp. Veitch, and Mr L. Bourne (hon. Secretary of the local Police Boys' Club movement.)'<sup>80</sup> The three clubs were thought significant enough to be described by the newspaper as a 'movement'. A year later, on the front page of the paper was reported, 'an atmosphere of jollity' at the Boulevard branch of the police boys' club concert and prize giving, where the entertainments this time included 'dancers', a 'vocalist', 'accordionist', 'ventriloquist and illusionist' and 'pianist'.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, pp. 3-12.

<sup>79</sup> 'Gymnastics Display at Lancaster Lads' Club', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 19 February 1931, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> 'Police Boys' Club – St. Paul's St. Centre Entertained', *The Daily Mail*, 28 December 1943, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> 'Police Boys' Club', *The Daily Mail*, 23 December 1944, p. 1.

In these accounts of the clubs at Hyde, Hull, Manchester and Lancaster, evidence of their joyous reception by their local communities and the extensive range of activities on offer can be found. Also revealed were the quality of the facilities, the popularity of the clubs with substantial numbers enrolling (100 at Hyde, 150 at Hull, 650 at Lancaster respectively), and the fun and entertainment that they provided. The articles portray a positive image of the clubs as local success stories.

How similar was the portrayal of these clubs to other boys' clubs? Using Salford Lads' Club as an example the *Manchester Courier and General Advertiser* revealed that 'the greatest measure of success had been achieved' on the side of the club 'devoted to physical development' although there had been 'marked' success in 'other sections, too.'<sup>82</sup> A wide range of non-sporting activities were also on offer at Salford including: 'ambulance work, wood-carving and inlaying, fretwork, carpentry, and violin classes,' there was also 'a library, minstrel troupe, a debating society, labour bureau, a savings bank, a Whit-week camp, and a Sunday school and Bible class.'<sup>83</sup> An article in *The Manchester Guardian*, twenty years later revealed that club membership was just under 1000 and the facilities the club offers included:

Junior and senior games rooms, billiard room, library, classes held under supervision of the Salford Education Committee, recreative classes (joinery, fretwork, boot repairing, basket-making), male voice choir, gymnasium, physical training, boxing, football, cricket, harriers, "Club News" (a fortnightly chronicle), penny savings bank, and seaside camp.<sup>84</sup>

Salford was presented as a club where the activities available went beyond just physical recreation, but the quote also indicates the motivations of club organisers. There was a large range of activities to choose from: theoretically something for every boy. The range of pursuits were comparable to those found within the police-led clubs they included sports, non-sporting recreation, and activities such as 'joinery' (at Salford) and 'woodwork' (at Hull) that served to prepare boys for the world of work (a theme that is discussed further in Chapter Five). As noted in the introduction activities experienced as part of membership of a youth organisation had a ritual element and were crucial to the group's sense of identity. Moreover, group organisers sought to control young people

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<sup>82</sup> 'Salford Lads' Club: Mr J.G. Groves MP. It's Continued Success', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 30 September 1904, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> 'Salford Lads' Club – Lord Mayor's Generosity', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 29 November 1907, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> 'Salford Lads' Club: Record of Year's Work', *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 February 1926, p. 7.



through activities by replacing unregulated leisure pursuits with regulated ones such as sports, and those that taught a skill, encouraging the physical and mental ‘fitness’ of the future generation.

The police-led clubs were also presented in articles as having had a positive affect on the reduction of juvenile crime figures. In the socialist magazine *Labour* writer Alex Thompson wrote about the success of Norwich Lads’ Club in reducing juvenile crime in the area. He described the club as the one institution that justified the people of Norwich’s ‘intense pride in their City.’ Thompson quoted numbers throughout the article saying that in 21 years 12,000 lads had passed through the doors of the club, 7,000 spectators attended their annual boxing competition and the library contained over 4,000 volumes. Continuing this theme he wrote: ‘Statistics of juvenile crime in Norwich show that in 1913, 96 children under 16 were charged in the local police courts...In 1922, it had fallen to 12 and in 1923, to 7. In some years not one young person has been sent to reformatory or industrial school.’ He felt that such numbers were ‘testament to the great achievement of Norwich Lads’ Club,’ and upheld the ‘Socialist belief that what superior persons call the “unfit” are not necessarily depraved in body or mind or soul,’ and that ‘nearly every bad boy has been made bad’ and with the right treatment had the potential to become a ‘good citizen.’<sup>85</sup> In this Thompson was attributing the success of the club to a community focused approach to crime, as opposed to one that concentrated on law and order. Moreover, the success of the police-led clubs was almost always attributed to the positive vision of turning potentially delinquent boys into good citizens by altering their environment, a concept that is explored in greater depth later on in this chapter.

Throughout the 1930s Norwich’s profile as a successful club that had reduced juvenile crime in the city was also communicated by articles in the *Police Review*. Moreover, Norwich was an exceptionally large club listing 3756 members in the NABC annual report for 1930-1931.<sup>86</sup> These factors may well have made Norwich famous amongst British police forces in the interwar period and it is probable that the police-led boys’ club movement grew from that club alone. Dain did not acknowledge any police-led clubs that inspired him, and there is no evidence that such clubs existed before Norwich.

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<sup>85</sup> Alex Thompson, ‘Saving the Children’, *Labour - The Workers’ Magazine* 1939, pp. 227-228.

<sup>86</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Fourteen to Eighteen: The Critical Years of Boyhood, Annual Report, 1930-1*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1931, p. 34.

Newspapers and magazines may have been instrumental in spreading the police-led clubs alongside Dain's connections with other Chief Constables. There is definite evidence that the formation of a police boys' club at Norwich inspired similar establishments elsewhere. An extract from *Lancaster Boys' Club Golden Jubilee 1929-1979 Souvenir Brochure* reveals that members of a committee 'consisting of representatives of the Rotary Club, Police and other interested bodies...paid a visit to Norwich where a successful boys' club was there being run under Police guidance,' before they established the club at Lancaster.<sup>87</sup> In a *Police Review* article dated November 4<sup>th</sup> 1938, the club at Swansea was described as 'a very successful runner up to its elder brother' at Norwich.<sup>88</sup> In the 'Notes and Comments' of the *Police Review* on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1941, Dain, was described as 'the "father" of all Police Clubs for lads'.<sup>89</sup> Finally, an explicit link is made between Norwich and Hull in a front page piece, from the *Hull Daily Mail*, entitled *Prevention of Juvenile Crime*, published on March 10<sup>th</sup> 1943, it reads:

Convinced that one of the best ways of preventing juvenile crime is to give youngsters something interesting to do during their leisure hours, Hull City Police decided yesterday to form a boys' club on similar lines to that which has met with such great success at Norwich...

The result at Norwich was the keeping of the lads off the streets and a reduction in juvenile crime to the lowest in the country.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, the success of the club at Norwich, in preventing juvenile crime, was reported on nationally by the general press. This could have raised the profile of the club and contributed to a lesser extent to the spread of the police-led clubs, although connections between the Chief Constables was probably a bigger factor. Moreover, like Norwich, other police-led clubs were represented in the press as successfully preventing juvenile crime. Lancaster Boys' Club, for example, was described in the regional press as 'a most efficient establishment' where 'there were nearly 500 boys, not one of whom had been in the hands of the police.'<sup>91</sup> Finally when 'Coun. T. H. Wray' raised concerns at a Hull City Council meeting, regarding the opening night of the club at Boulevard when a number of police cars were used and police officers were in attendance to direct traffic outside the club, thus being diverted away from more pressing duties; he was rebuffed by

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<sup>87</sup> 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979', p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> 'Police Welfare Work', *The Police Review*, 4 November 1938, p. 426.

<sup>89</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, pp. 13-18.

<sup>90</sup> 'Prevention of Juvenile Crime – Formation of City Police Boys' Club', *The Daily Mail*, 10 March 1943, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> 'Developing Boys' Character', *The Lancashire Daily Post*, 13 April 1934, p.3.

the ‘majority of the members of the Council’ who argued that the club would be instrumental in detection and prevention of crime, the prevention of crime being the most ‘important of the two.’<sup>92</sup>

### **The vision of club founders**

Historian Harry Hendrick identified that the main aim of the boys’ club movement at the beginning of the twentieth century was to provide boys’ with ‘health’ and ‘happiness,’ and enable them to become good citizens by encouraging them to spend their leisure hours in sport and organised recreation rather than on ‘the street’ or in ‘the city,’ locations demonised by middle-class commentators. Club organisers aimed to ‘reclaim’ and ‘re-educate’ boys rather than simply rescue them from the streets.<sup>93</sup> More recently, historian Melanie Tebbutt has researched into the interwar boys’ club movement to provide context for her own father’s experiences in the Boys’ Brigade. She has revealed that interwar boys’ clubs were predominantly non-military in nature. Through asserting conservative notions of gender their primary vision was to instil that right sort of manliness in boys and by doing so fashion them into ideal citizens. This was to be achieved through physical activity to promote ‘healthy minds and bodies’.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, their emphasis on citizenship made boys’ clubs attractive to those writing government policy, local business people and ‘those in positions of power and authority.’<sup>95</sup> Thus, the main vision behind the boys’ club movement during the first half of the twentieth century according to these historians was, predominantly, the creation of good citizens through healthy recreation and removal from corrupting environments. This point of view is supported by reviewing the work of contemporary commentators on the clubs: Llewellyn Smith, Henriques and Morgan, and the publications of the NABC in general.

In Llewellyn Smith’s 1930 publication for the NABC, the *Principles and Aims of the Boys’ Club Movement*, he clearly set out the vision behind boys’ club movement of the

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<sup>92</sup> ‘Police Cars at Boys’ Club Opening: Hull Councillor Told Work Well Worth Supporting’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 7 January 1944, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth. Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 172-173.

<sup>94</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71.

period writing that: ‘Its aims are two-fold, to raise the standard of fitness for life and to create good citizenship.’ Llewellyn Smith’s vision of citizenship started in the club, where boys learnt self-government through physical fitness, and stretched far beyond to encompass ‘a nation of fit men, fit to play its part in the Empire and the world.’<sup>96</sup> Henriques stressed in the introduction to his revised edition of *Club Leadership Today*, first published in the 1930s, that ‘the prevention of delinquency is only part of a club’s purpose. Its real purpose is a positive and not a negative one: to provide the right kind of opportunities through which the ordinary manly boy can grow into a decent manly man.’ When recounting the history of the boys’ club movement in his book *Young Citizen* academic A.E. Morgan used emotive language to describe how, in the late nineteenth century the boys’ club movement had developed out of response to problems generated by industrialisation, he wrote:

The growth of large towns in the industrial era had created a vast social problem, of which one facet was the well-being of youth. Reliable witnesses tell of the violent excesses of unbridled lads and young men who made night perilous in these seething cities.<sup>97</sup>

As noted in the introduction above, a reoccurring theme in the history of youth has been the simultaneous casting of young people as both vulnerable and threatening.<sup>98</sup> Morgan is concerned with the ‘well-being of youth’, but his use of the phrases ‘violent excesses’, ‘perilous’ night and ‘seething cities’ draw on images of moral contamination exaggerating the sense of threat posed by unregulated youth. He believed that the development of boys’ clubs which provided ‘a training place in the social art of citizenship’ and were later galvanised by the creation of ‘local federations and the National Association’ was the solution to tackling the youth problem.<sup>99</sup> For Morgan the main aim of the boys’ club was to combat the ill affects of urban squalor by, morally regulating the leisure activities of young people and thus creating good citizens.

The National Association of Boys’ Clubs was very important in disseminating the aims of the boys’ club movement through their official publications which included handbooks, annual reports and their quarterly journal entitled *The Boy*. One article from a 1945 issue of *The Boy* summed up the vision behind the boys’ club movement of the

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<sup>96</sup> H. W. Llewellyn Smith, *Clubs for Boys: Being a Statement of the Principles and Aims of the Boys’ Club Movement*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1930, pp. 19-20.

<sup>97</sup> Morgan, *Young Citizen*, p. 102.

<sup>98</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

interwar period. In it, another academic, Dr. J. F. Duff, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Durham, argued that the creation of boys' clubs in modern times had been made necessary through 'a need to inculcate citizenship because many ways in which it was automatically inculcated do not exist in the modern home.' He concluded that 'citizenship was such an important part of character that attempts to train character without reference to citizenship were bound to fail to produce a complete character' and that character should be gained thorough citizenship not citizenship through character.<sup>100</sup> The emphasis on the role of the home environment hampering the potential of young people in becoming good citizens reveals another dimension to the aims of the boys' club movement in addition to removing them from the corrupting temptations of the street. Thus, the main vision behind boys' clubs as proffered by Llewellyn Smith, Henriques, Morgan and Duff was to create good citizens by removing boys from the corrupting environment of the street. Moreover, good citizenship was linked to physical fitness and 'manliness'.

Now it is interesting to turn to the vision behind the police-led boys' clubs at Norwich, Hyde and Manchester to discover whether they were also preoccupied with creating good citizens by using the same methods. At Norwich, Dain's vision was set out in his pamphlet *Police Welfare Work Among Boys*, and was centred upon preventive policing and citizenship. The Norwich pamphlet, due to its length and detail, gives the best insight out of all the police-led clubs, into the vision behind them. Dain believed that working-class boys who lacked recreational opportunities at home and had uncertain employment prospects took to the street for entertainment and became a problem for the police. Boys were not naturally bad, therefore healthy exercise was the answer as it would build their characters. Dain saw himself as progressive, seeking an alternative to the 'stern punishment, birchings' and 'imprisonments' of a previous generation. He believed harsh punishments destroyed self-respect in boys preventing them from becoming good citizens.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, Dain argued that police-led boys' clubs were the best lads' clubs providing 'certain advantages which could not be secured in any other way.'<sup>102</sup> Instead of preaching moral improvement to members, Dain aimed to remove the natural

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<sup>100</sup> J. F. Duff, 'Character and Citizenship', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys*, 18.3 (1945), p. 85.

<sup>101</sup> John Henry Dain, *Police Welfare Work among Boys*, Norwich: Norwich Lads' Club, 1932, pp. 5-7.

<sup>102</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 14.

antagonism between youths and the police through ‘clean and healthy physical exercise and recreation in a jolly atmosphere of good comradeship.’ ‘Good citizenship’ rather than ‘suspicion and hostility’ would give ‘the lads a mental attitude of mutual helpfulness with the police and what the police stand for in the community.’ In addition, the police would benefit from the relationship enabling ‘them to bring a wider understanding to their *official* work and its human relationships to the community in whose service they are.’<sup>103</sup> Finally, Dain explicitly linked manly sporting activity to citizenship when he argued that:

The physical deterioration of so many young people has its beginning in aimless loafing and the temptations of the streets at night...pride in keeping fit lays the foundations for life of habits, of self-respect and self-government. The lads of to-day are the good men and healthy citizens of tomorrow in the making.<sup>104</sup>

At Hyde Lads’ Club, founder Chief Constable J.W. Danby emphasised the importance of citizenship within a local context by entreating club organisers and members to work along side him in a friendly manner, and for the good of the community. He addressed club members directly on the opening night of the club saying to them: ‘I want you boys and myself and all associated with the club to make the town better. When you see me in the street I shall want you to feel that I am your friend. We must all try to pull together, enjoy ourselves and help each other.’<sup>105</sup>

The vision behind Manchester City Lads’ Club was to prevent boys from becoming locally ‘a nuisance’ by providing them with healthy recreation and therefore creating good citizens. Aberdein wrote in the club’s annual report for 1938-39 that:

In the normal adolescent there is a natural desire to get fit and there is generally to be found in some degree a spirit of adventure. Civilisation has resulted in a large percentage of the people living in close proximity in large towns. Unless our adolescents, in the towns particularly are provided with the means to healthy exercise and recreation, no one must be surprised if they run wild and become a nuisance to the rest of the community.<sup>106</sup>

Aberdein also linked citizenship to nation-building, saying of club members that ‘we see in these new friends of ours not only good citizens of the future but also potential allies in our work of upholding the laws of the country.’<sup>107</sup> The promotion of physical fitness

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<sup>103</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 15.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Chief Constable’s Boys’ Club’, p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> GMPMA, Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Papers, *Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, Manchester: Brunswick Press, 1939, p. 6.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

for the future generation was a patriotic activity and in keeping with the aims of the National Fitness Campaign, founded in 1937, just a year before Aberdein wrote his report.

An article in *The Police Review* that charted the fortunes of the club at Manchester described it as an example of ‘one of the most valuable forms of social service’, adding that according to John Maxwell Chief Constable of Manchester at the time, the club challenged the old-fashioned notion that the police were ‘a purely repressive body organised for the suppression of crime’ as it proved that police officers could ‘participate in the social work that is being carried out for the benefit of the rising generation.’<sup>108</sup> This final quote also infers that the vision behind the club did not purely concern the transformation of its members into good citizens it also played a part in challenging the negative image of the police as a ‘repressive body’ replacing it with the positive concept of participation in ‘social work’.

Creating good citizens was central to the vision behind police-led clubs as well as the boys’ club movement as a whole. Moreover, the police conformed to the wider boys’ club movement in linking citizenship with nation-building, physical fitness and manliness. By participating in such social work the police could benefit from the positive image it generated amongst the local community.

### **Juvenile delinquency**

Although Henriques may have wished to emphasise the boys’ club’s ‘positive’ role in producing manly men rather than its role in preventing juvenile delinquency, preventing juvenile delinquency was, nevertheless, one of the principal aims behind the boys’ club movement and was inextricably linked to the goal of producing good citizens. Before investigating the wider boys’ club movement and the police-led boys’ club’s relationship with juvenile delinquency it is useful to review the historiography of juvenile delinquency for the first half of the twentieth century.

Several historians have explored the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the police during this period. Clive Emsley has charted the changing trends in attitudes towards juvenile delinquency over the whole twentieth century and has highlighted the

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<sup>108</sup> ‘Manchester Police Lads’ Club’, *The Police Review*, 3 February 1939, p. 98.

positive approaches sought, in the first half, to tackle the problem.<sup>109</sup> Jackson and Bartie corroborate this, and have also shown how police officers modelled citizenship in order to reduce juvenile delinquency.<sup>110</sup> In a similar vein, Weinberger has demonstrated how the police used discretion when dealing with young delinquents.<sup>111</sup> Emsley argues that at the beginning of the twentieth century, scares about hooliganism had diminished in the media in comparison to the late nineteenth century. Fighting gangs such as the ‘Scuttlers’ in Manchester declined due to tough policing and sentences, and the rise of alternative entertainments such as football and the cinema. Police officers began to look for preventative measures to reduce juvenile delinquency. Youth offending declined until the First World War; it declined again in the 1920s, only to increase in the 1930s and peak again during the Second World War. He adds that there may be some truth in historian Stephen Humphries’s assertion that during this whole period most crimes committed by youths, such as stealing coal, could be attributable to living in poverty. Emsley continues that by the 1960s, with the arrival of beatniks, and later hippies, there was more concern from conservative social commentators about deviant behaviour, and they reacted to ‘moral panics’ throughout this period: gangster movies in the 1930s and mods and rockers in the 1960s.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, Emsley argues that it is uncertain whether or not juvenile delinquency increased or decreased over the course of the twentieth century and although efforts to limit juvenile crime throughout the period had similar motivations, optimism regarding their efficacy dwindled. In the first half of the twentieth century more efforts were made to ascribe criminal behaviour in youths as mere ‘naughtiness’, which they would grow out of with teaching and maturity, it could even be channelled to the good of society. However, by the end of the twentieth century in view of the rise in crime statistics such positive arguments, had almost vanished even amongst liberal commentators.<sup>113</sup>

The idea of juvenile delinquency as ‘naughtiness’ is a view supported by Jackson and Bartie’s work. In their research on the juvenile delinquency of the mid-twentieth century they reveal that many charges that came before the juvenile courts in England and Scotland were ‘interpreted through the concept of “play gone wrong” and in terms of a

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<sup>109</sup> Clive Emsley, *e in England 1750-1900*, Harlow: Longman, 2011, pp. 63-75.

<sup>110</sup> Jackson and Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup> Weinberger, *Best Police in the World*, p. 150.

<sup>112</sup> Emsley, *Crime and Society*, pp. 63-75.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82.



contestation between young people and adults over the appropriation of space and objects during leisure'. Furthermore they add that the correct use of place and space was the main aim of post-war juvenile justice; and that during the period from the 1940s to the 1960s 'the re-education of young people in the correct use of place and space was the key aim of post-war juvenile justice.'<sup>114</sup> Jackson and Bartie have also shown how the police until the 1950s modelled a particular form of "citizenship", inherited from the Victorian past, that emphasised the 'building of character', through conformity, hard work and the performance of gendered "respectability".<sup>115</sup> The police sat within the context of a youth justice system that represented a traditional response to juvenile delinquency, and illustrated how penalty and welfarism could work in tandem to produce ideal citizens and combat juvenile delinquency. They argue that the 'dominance of penal-welfarism as a strategy and set of practices, which reflected the belief that juvenile delinquents could be 'saved' and converted into productive 'citizens', continued into the 1940s and 1950s.'<sup>116</sup> In Chapters Five and Six it is demonstrated how the police-led boys' club aimed to save juvenile delinquents and convert them into good citizens through character-building exercises, hard work and the inculcation of manliness.

Weinberger has argued that discretion was largely used in policing youths and she has commented on how police officers used social 'signals' to distinguish between cheeky children and delinquents and were generally paternalistic in their dealings with children. The oral accounts of former police officers, she recorded, reveal a nostalgia for a 'more stable and clearly defined social order' as 'the values of the class and gender from which they mostly were drawn, tied in effortlessly with the manner of policing required by and acceptable to the authorities and general (middle and upper-working-class) public.'<sup>117</sup> Police officers were keen to down-play incidents involving confrontation with youths, 'it was the task of the police to keep the more disreputable minority of ...disrespectful youths firmly in their place...The police were always winners, since 'right' was always on their side.'<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Louise A. Jackson and Angela Bartie, ' "Children of the City": Juvenile Justice, Property, and Place in England and Scotland, 1945–60', *The Economic History Review* 88.1 (2011), p. 111.

<sup>115</sup> Jackson and Bartie, *Policing youth*, pp. 167-8.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 226.

<sup>117</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 208.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, p. 207.

Thus, the historians of juvenile delinquency reviewed here have demonstrated that a positive attitude towards the ability to tackle juvenile delinquency prevailed during the period under investigation, as juvenile offences could be viewed simply as ‘naughtiness’ or ‘play gone wrong’. Therefore, police officers began to look for preventative measures to reduce juvenile delinquency that included the use of police discretion in combatting youth crime and the promotion of a patriarchal model of citizenship as a response to juvenile delinquency.

Contemporary accounts were upbeat about the reforming benefits of club membership and literature exploring the causes of delinquency often cited clubs as part of the cure. Juvenile delinquency was a hot topic in the NABC’s quarterly journal. In 1928 Alexander Paterson, H.M. Commissioner of Prisons, contributed an article that presented several cautionary tales including those of young juvenile boys who had been reformed by attendance at a boys’ club and one boys’ path that had been stymied by the closure of a club. He began the article proclaiming that ‘every little lad born into the world is...both a potential policeman and a potential criminal’, and ended saying that ‘few men know better the value of such organizations for lads than the police forces of England...They do not want him to become a criminal, but prefer that the club should prevent the necessity for arrest and detention by turning him into a decent citizen.’<sup>119</sup> Here, Paterson reaffirmed the main aim of the boys’ club movement, the creation of ‘decent citizens’, presented a positive attitude to reform and directly linked the police with clubs and the potential to prevent juvenile delinquency. The following year the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, William Joynson-Hicks, wrote in the same publication:

In addition to assisting boys who may have little, if any, inclination to do wrong, the clubs have also been the means in many cases of helping others to overcome the handicap of a bad start in life. Realising that the well directed use of a boy’s energies will often prevent him from getting into further trouble, magistrates when making a probation order, sometimes wisely direct that an effort shall be made to link up the probationer with a suitable club.<sup>120</sup>

As far as it can be ascertained no statistics remain regarding the number of boys on probation that were referred by a magistrate to a boys’ club. However, the above quote serves to illustrate the boys’ clubs’ intended role, albeit informally, within the youth

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<sup>119</sup> Alexander Paterson, ‘The Apprentice to Crime’, *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 1.4 (1928), pp. 2-4.

<sup>120</sup> William Joynson-Hicks, ‘The Club and the Delinquent Boy’, *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 2.3 (1929), p. 49.

justice system. Moreover, it demonstrates the broad appeal of boys' clubs as in contrast to the liberal Paterson, Joynson-Hicks was described as 'the most prudish, puritanical, and protestant home secretary of the twentieth century.'<sup>121</sup>

Llewellyn Smith was also keen to redirect the energies of boys in the right way in order to avoid juvenile delinquency. In his *Principles and Aims* he sought to divert the energies of boys who were members of street gangs that hung around on street corners, he wrote:

The street corner is a place not of choice but of necessity; what has to be done is to find an alternative. The gang...is a natural social unit; what has to be done is to direct the spirit of the gang towards a constructive and socially useful end. The gang spirit repressed is often a nuisance and a danger...In a good Boys' Club it is expressed in a perfectly natural form and so may the more easily be directed towards the good of society.<sup>122</sup>

In this Llewellyn Smith again presented a positive attitude towards the prevention of juvenile delinquency as boys could easily be converted into good citizens through club work. Moreover, once again, the boys' club becomes a forum for social control where boys' unregulated leisure activities are replaced with those that have 'a constructive and socially useful end' for 'the good of society'. In the absence of the voices of club members, it is interesting to speculate just how successful clubs were in converting 'gang spirit' into something virtuous and whether or not there was a certain amount of the resistance through humour and 'larking about' described by historian Stephen Humphries.<sup>123</sup>

Basil Henriques, in an article for the *Metropolitan Police College Journal*, investigated the causes of juvenile delinquency in some detail. He maintained that they were threefold: 'either in their psychological make-up, or in their home environment, or in their "spirit of adventure"'. In other words, they are either psychopathic; or economic or social; or normal and natural.' He suggested that the 'psychopathic type' were best dealt with through 'Child Guidance Clinics' or at the 'Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency'; those with a troubled home environment could benefit from 'the wise and sympathetic friendship of a good club leader', and the 'happiness' found through club activities would enable him to cope with home problems; the 'normal and natural' type of boy, however, would benefit most from club membership as he only 'offends in the

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<sup>121</sup> 'Hicks, William Joynson – [nicknamed Jix], first Viscount Brentford', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33858>, accessed 24 November 2018.

<sup>122</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *Clubs for Boys*, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Humphries, *Hooligans*, pp. 1-27.

spirit of adventure and mischief which, after all, should be the natural characteristic of healthy adolescent boys if they are worth their salt as men.’ As well as being fashioned into an ideal man, club membership would ‘enable him to develop all his faculties, spiritual, physical and mental, so as to be able to become as a man a full and useful citizen of a free, democratic state.’<sup>124</sup> Consequently, Henriques believed that boys’ clubs were an antidote to juvenile delinquency that produced manly men and ideal citizens. Most importantly, Henriques stressed the role of the police in the boys’ club movement. He praised ‘police clubs in Ceylon’ and police clubs in England that ‘undoubtedly’ were ‘a great boon to the boys of the cities in which they’ were ‘situated,’ and warned that: ‘In those districts where there are no boys’ clubs the police must be prepared to face juvenile and adolescent delinquency.’<sup>125</sup>

The King’s Commissioner and academic A.E. Morgan writing in 1943 believed that delinquency arose ‘from maladjustment of the individual to society...arising from bad family conditions, faulty treatment at school, psychological or even physiological disturbances.’ He added that ‘naughtiness in the young proceeds largely from lack of better occupation,’ accordingly associating delinquency with ‘naughtiness’ in keeping with many of his contemporaries. With regards to the power of clubs to reform delinquent boys’ he maintained, quite realistically, that though there is ‘little doubt that the boy whose energy and enthusiasm are harnessed by membership of an active organization...is less apt to be a delinquent’ he also recognised that ‘on the other hand it is the boy who is prone to mischief who is less likely to join a recreational organization.’<sup>126</sup> Generally though, as seen above, young delinquent boys were considered to have the potential to reform their ways by directing their natural energies away from the street gang into the boys’ club. The correct environment was key to their development, as a propensity to commit crime was seen most often as a problem with their home life, and boys’ clubs were promoted as a method to counter such unfortunate backgrounds which forced them out onto the street in the first place.

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<sup>124</sup> Basil L. Q. Henriques, ‘Boys Clubs in Relation to Delinquency’, *Metropolitan Police College Journal* 3 (1937), pp. 203-205.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 207.

<sup>126</sup> Morgan, *Young Citizen*, pp. 68-9.

In keeping with the views of the boys' club movement as a whole the police felt that they were dealing positively with the problem of juvenile delinquency by opening their own lads' clubs and converting boys in danger of becoming delinquent by removing them from the damaging environment of the home and the street. As illustrated in the section relating to the portrayal of the clubs through newspaper articles, not only did the police see their clubs as an example of valuable social work, which led to the prevention of crime, they felt they could use statistics to show real results. Taking Norwich Lads' Club as a prime example Frank Geoghegan, Chairman of the Federation of London Working Boys' Clubs writing to the editor of *The Times* on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1926, cited the club as an example of crime prevention in action. By quoting Dain's recent address to the Chief Constables Association he emphasised that 'naturally bad boys are hard to find', and that while 'boys constitute one of the problems of the community, constructive preventive work was a solution of the problem.' Moreover, 'constructive prevention work...built up...communities' as a form of 'active and progressive citizenship.'<sup>127</sup> Again it was felt the club at Norwich was having a real effect on juvenile crime statistics. A report detailing Prince Henry's visit to Norwich in 1925, for example, revealed that the club had '6,000 members' and stressed the educational purpose of the club and its link with the local reduction in juvenile delinquency. The report described Norwich as 'a happy meeting place for lads who would otherwise be roaming the streets' and 'an educational establishment in the most real sense of the term.' The methods by which the club executed 'the work of character-building' included 'healthy physical exercises and the constant wholesome example of the police officers who assist Mr Dain in the conduct of the club.' The report went on to conclude that it was a 'significant fact...that the number of boys from Norwich in industrial schools, which housed neglected, vagrant or unruly children in danger of becoming juvenile delinquents, and other establishments is now almost at vanishing point.'<sup>128</sup>

Ten years later *The Times*, was still upholding Norwich as an example of preventative policing that tackled juvenile delinquency directly. In an article dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 1936 it was noted that they had 'a nightly attendance of nearly 700 boys'. The concept behind the club and its relationship with juvenile delinquency were heavily stressed in the

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<sup>127</sup> 'Working Boys' Clubs', *The Times*, 16 June 1926, p.11.

<sup>128</sup> 'Prince Henry at Norwich', *The Times*, 3 June 1925, p. 9.

account, (subtitled ‘success of social work in Norwich’) demonstrated by the following quote:

Mr Dain believes that the case for police participation in welfare work among boys is stronger than that of any other form of constructive social service. His view is that their work among boys deals with them at the age when by far the greater part of criminal behaviour has its origins. The participation of the police is invaluable in creating understanding between the force which society has organized for its protection and the class of youth who are prone in neglected conditions, to regard that social organization with hostility.

So confident in the ability of the club at Norwich to reduce juvenile delinquency figures locally the article went on to relate the following figures taken from Dain’s 1932 pamphlet:

The statistics of juvenile crime in Norwich show how real the influence of the club has been. In 1913 there were 96 children and young persons under 16 charged by the local police courts, and the figure remained about the same until 1919, when it fell to 45. In 1922 the number had fallen to 12, and has since remained near that low level...Yet the city has a population of 130,000, much industrial congestion, a good deal of unemployment, and unwholesome housing conditions in a number of areas.<sup>129</sup>

Consequently, the police-led club at Norwich was seen to have a very real role in preventing juvenile delinquency. Although as historian Clive Emsley has pointed out ‘the figures for juvenile crime slipped back to their pre-war level in 1920 and continued to decline throughout the decade.’<sup>130</sup> Norwich’s success may simply have been attributable to a wider national trend rather than the efforts of the police club. Now it is interesting to turn to the clubs at Hyde, Manchester, Swansea and Hull to assess their relationship with the prevention of juvenile delinquency. In an article detailing the opening night of Hyde Lads’ Club the problem of juvenile delinquency was addressed in the following statement about the boys who joined at the opening evening in 1928:

Of these a proportion have come under police notice or been before the magistrates, but the majority are boys from nine to 18, for whom a club of this description provides an obvious boon. They come from the poorer districts, but every boy is clean and decently clothed.<sup>131</sup>

This quote suggests that the organisers of Hyde Lads’ Club aimed to tackle juvenile delinquency directly by providing alternative recreation for known juvenile delinquents; and offering a social service for the poor, yet non-delinquent, ‘majority’. Moreover, the remark about the boys being ‘clean and decently clothed’ suggests that the club saw itself as part of respectable working-class culture, a theme that is expanded upon in Chapter

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<sup>129</sup> ‘Boys’ Club Organized By Police’, *The Times*, 12 August 1936, p. 8.

<sup>130</sup> Emsley, *Crime and Society*, p. 67.

<sup>131</sup> ‘Chief Constable’s Boys’ Club’, p. 9.

Three of this thesis. In a similar vein at Swansea the Chief Constable expressed his opinion to the *Police Review* on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1940 that 'suitable and properly controlled juvenile organisations can play an important part in catering for the leisure hours of young people. In this connection Swansea Police Boys' Club is doing its bit...' <sup>132</sup>

Alexander Aberdein, founder of Manchester City Police Lads' Club', kept an extensive file of newspaper cuttings relating to his club, and others run by police. His club's role as a method of preventing juvenile delinquency is evident in many of the cuttings he chose to keep. For example, in an extract from the 'Notes and Comments' section of the *Police Review*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 1938 the club was described as the 'latest addition to the growing number of Lads' Clubs started and run by the Police, ' and it was noted that 'while the Home Office is making praiseworthy efforts, through its Children's Branch, to investigate the causes of juvenile delinquency, the Police, on their own initiative, are putting into practice their belief that prevention is better than cure.' <sup>133</sup> Two days earlier the *Daily Express* had run a feature entitled *Daily Express Goes to a Police Station Party*, which included a photograph of a policeman recruiting youths from a street corner and claimed the 'club had halved juvenile crime in the district.' On the same day the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* and *Daily Dispatch* also picked up the claim about crime being halved, the former paper maintaining Manchester as 'an example of the best kind of prevention, because their work is positive not negative'; and in the latter, a journalist named A.W. Ledbrooke, ended with the statement that: 'I fancy his (Aberdein's) proudest moment will be when one of the members indicates a wish to join the force.' In the *Police Review* on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1939, Manchester was described as a prime example of 'social work' being carried out by the police and over a year later on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1940 the *Manchester Guardian* described the club as an example of the 'preventive side of police work.' Finally, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1941 the *Police Chronicle and Constabulary World* proclaimed Manchester Police Lads' club as 'the antidote to juvenile crime.' <sup>134</sup>

Moreover, Aberdein's scrapbook gave a sense that a police boys' club *movement* had been established to tackle juvenile delinquency. In the account from the *Police Review*

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<sup>132</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, p. 14.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>134</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, 1937-1942, pp. 1-18.

dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1940 the shortcomings of parents and education authorities were identified as being the main reason the police had to take matters into their own hands, therefore:

If education authorities and parents did their duty there would be far less for the Police to do in looking after young law-breakers...In the meantime the Police have themselves taken a hand and given a lead in the organisation of clubs the purpose of which is to keep the lads out of mischief by offering them attractive occupations and interesting pursuits for their leisure time...The secret of success in all these undertakings is in the personal service rendered.<sup>135</sup>

In this the *Police Review* was using the police-led boys' clubs as an example of a pioneering response to juvenile crime, while at the same time subscribing to a trope, reoccurring throughout the twentieth century, that parents are to blame. As pointed out by John Welshman the 'problem family' became a principle focus of post-war social engineering.<sup>136</sup> The police were represented as having shouldered a social responsibility that others had neglected. Moreover, they were not simply 'going through the motions' but undertaking a 'personal service' volunteering their own spare time. In a *Police Review* article from April 1940 an explicit reference was made to a police clubs movement when they wrote of: 'the Chief Constable of Norwich, and other Chief Constables who have so successfully developed a boys' club movement...'<sup>137</sup> In the 'Notes and Comments' of the *Police Review* on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1941, which featured the club in Manchester, police-led boys' clubs were defined as providing the appropriate training for war service and 'for the peace that is to follow,' and clubs such as Norwich, Swansea and Manchester were identified as 'an effective means of reducing the number of juvenile offenders.'<sup>138</sup> Comparable claims were made about the police clubs at Hull. In an article from the *Hull Daily Mail* entitled *Boys' Clubs Return Best Dividends*, published on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1944, the clubs were presented as having the potential to turn 'juvenile delinquents' into heroic citizens who were 'saving' the country. It quoted 'Ald. J.L. Schultz' who was the 'president of the Police Club Movement' in Hull, who argued:

More balderdash was talked about juvenile delinquency than any other subject...boys of to-day were no better and no worse than they have ever been. They only needed care and guidance and they were now getting it from police clubs. Juvenile delinquents of yesterday were now saving this country on foreign fields. During this war the greatest debt which would be credited to the account of the police force was the dividend of the boys' clubs.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>136</sup> Welshman, *Underclass*, loc. 1917 of 9256.

<sup>137</sup> 'Juvenile Delinquency', *The Police Review*, 26 April 1940, p. 320.

<sup>138</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, pp. 13-18.

<sup>139</sup> 'Boys' Clubs Return Best Dividends', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 10 May 1944, p. 4.



Additionally, in alluding to ‘foreign fields’ Schultz reinforces the connection between boys’ clubs and militarism. For Shultz the police are actively preparing the boys for military service so that the nation can reap the rewards later. The militaristic nationalism exhibited here distinctly separates the police-led boys’ clubs from pacifist organisations such as the woodcraft movements. However, in reviewing the police-led clubs relationship with juvenile delinquency, it is revealed they did not depart particularly from the wider boys’ club movement in their attitude towards their ability to prevent juvenile delinquency by diverting youthful energies into positive activities. Such conformity backs the view that the police had a traditional take on citizenship and society during the period, as identified by Jackson and Bartie and Weinberger. However, where the police-led boys’ clubs took on their own distinct meaning was in the way that the police felt they were carrying out social work that directly addressed the prevention of juvenile crime, a problem that they had to deal with as part of their regular jobs. Moreover, a range of newspaper publications felt confident in citing their success in this area, particularly concerning Norwich. The *Police Review* went one step further in proclaiming that a police club movement had been established to deal directly with juvenile crime, which demonstrates the extent to which the police were hopeful about their ability to cure an age-old problem.

## **Conclusion**

Police-led boys clubs shared many characteristics with the wider boys’ club movement and their impact contributed to the impact of the increased numbers of boys’ clubs opened in Britain during the interwar and immediate post-war period. Police clubs were generally situated, like many other boys’ clubs within the NABC, in impoverished urban areas with high levels of unemployment concentrated within the industrial central belt of the nation. Both local and national newspapers charted the fortunes of police-led clubs and they were shown to be welcome activity centres and success stories where boxing champions were forged and a real impact could be made upon local crime figures. Citizenship was central to the vision behind police clubs as well as the nationwide boys’ club movement, although the police felt they were ideally situated to build boys’ characters and produce good citizens. Similarly, with regards to juvenile delinquency boys’ clubs were seen by contemporary commentators as a method to prevent crime. However, by taking on the challenge themselves the police felt they were dealing directly with the problem of

juvenile crime by engaging in preventative social work, to the extent to which they felt that they had created their own nationwide boys' club movement.

## **Chapter Three: The police-led boys' club in the working-class community**

### **Introduction**

Having established the police-led boys' club within the context of the wider national boys' club movement with regards to their geographical distribution, reception, and the vision behind them, it is important to turn to their role within the local community. In this chapter, their place within the local working-class community is considered, before moving on to an analysis of their relationship with members of local middle-class society in the following chapter.

In order to fully explore the role of the police-led boys' club in the working-class community it is necessary first to consider the historiography of working-class cultures, which illustrates the social context of the clubs' locale. Secondly, the question of how local in outlook police-led boys' clubs were is investigated. Thirdly, it is demonstrated that the clubs were run on a day-to-day basis by working-class police officer volunteers. As a result it is fascinating to investigate the motivations behind such involvement such as a sense of Christian duty, commitment to citizenship, and as a pathway to promotion, by examining the service records of individual police officers. Fourthly, how the clubs were used by police officers to combat juvenile delinquency within the local working-class community, with particular reference to perceived sexual deviance is revealed. And finally, the overall significance of the clubs within the working-class community is examined.

### **The historiography of working-class cultures**

The historiography of working-class cultures illustrates the social context of the clubs' locale because, amongst other things, an understanding of working-class cultures is important in developing an understanding of youth justice because the majority of juvenile delinquents were from working-class backgrounds, as were the police officers who interacted with them.<sup>140</sup> By the late 1980s historians were challenging the notion of working-class homogeneity and working-class people began to be viewed as belonging to different social, ethnic and cultural groups. John Benson argued that working-class

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<sup>140</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 18th Century to the Present*, London: Quercus, 2009; Joanne Klein, *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, 1900-1939*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010.

values should be recognised as subject to ‘age, gender, occupation, wages, accommodation, kin, neighbourhood and community.’<sup>141</sup> Similarly, in the 1990s Joanna Bourke, through focusing on gender and ethnicity, argued that the foundation of working-class identity is essentially social and cultural rather than political and institutional: working-class people constructed their identity through ‘the body, the home, the marketplace, the locality and the imagined nation.’<sup>142</sup> However, it was far from a shared identity as ‘even if routed in a single geographical space, (it) could not surmount the difficulties inherent in competitive society.’<sup>143</sup> She added, when considering the importance of locality in working-class cultures the ‘working-class community’ was a ‘retrospective construction’. Working-class networks, she argued, were, both ‘interlocking’ and ‘discordant’ as ‘individuals chose to give their allegiance to neighbours, kin, friends and acquaintances on a more *ad hoc* basis,’ and although their opportunities were restricted by lack of ‘resources’ and ‘cultural norms’ these norms were ‘not so fixed as to constitute a shared “identity”’.<sup>144</sup>

Lastly, the historiography of working-class cultures, especially through the work of Andrew Davies and Stephen Fielding, reveals the diverse nature of traditional working-class culture through exploration of locality and divisions between genders, generations and ethnicities, moving away from the more homogenised view of the working-classes presented by earlier historians such as Eric Hobsbawm.<sup>145</sup> In addition, historian Selina Todd highlights the complexity of working-class experience.<sup>146</sup> She claims ‘historians rarely use class as a frame through which to understand power, continuity and change.’<sup>147</sup> Adding, class ‘was a highly significant continuity in twentieth-century British history’ and through studying experience ‘the operation of power and the endurance of inequality’ can be investigated in a ‘historically sensitive manner.’<sup>148</sup> She has also presented a nuanced view of working-class youth in the interwar period. She challenges a too

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<sup>141</sup> John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain 1850-1939*, New York: Longman, 1989, p.207.

<sup>142</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Andrew Davies and Stephen Fielding (eds), *Workers' Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>146</sup> Selina Todd, ‘Class, experience and Britain’s twentieth century’, *Social History*, 39, 4 (2014), pp. 489-506.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 507.

simplistic image of interwar youth as the first teenagers defined by, amongst other things, their disposable income and identifies the gap between young people 'as dependants, and their importance to the family economy.' She argues that because 'young working-class people remained an important source of cheap labour' and their earnings contributed significantly to the family economy, class 'shaped their life experience', both economically and socially as 'their status was low and their consumption power constrained.'<sup>149</sup> Following on from the First World War expansion of the labour market between the 1930s and the 1950s, she argues: 'Youthful aspiration, increased affluence and an expansion in education and employment opportunities meant that youth was increasingly compressed, protected and distinct from adulthood for working-class as well as middle-class individuals after the Second World War.'<sup>150</sup> Thus, young working-class people's affluence and range of social opportunities broadened from the interwar into the early post-war period, but the extent of this was bound by certain limitations.

The historiography of working-class cultures and community therefore presents a complex and sometimes paradoxical picture of fluidity and continuity. The local working-class community was certainly not a homogeneous entity but an interwoven and complex platform for a variety of different relationships. The status of police officers was a good example of this complexity, as although they were from the local working-class communities they policed, they sometimes came into conflict with the community as arbiters of the state exercising nationally given powers. Given this conflict it is likely that the police-led boys' clubs set up to combat juvenile delinquency had both local and national influences. The experience of working-class youth was also multifaceted. Participation in boys' clubs, and indeed, police-led clubs would have fitted well within this complex picture and the dichotomy Todd highlights, as they were both an example of a means of protecting youth and defining them as distinct from adults, and symptomatic of limited leisure opportunities, being a cheaper option than more commercial leisure activities such as cinema-going or shopping.

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<sup>149</sup> Selina Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependants: Working-Class Young People in England, 1918–1955', *International Review of Social History* 52.1 (2007), pp. 58, 83–84.

<sup>150</sup> Selina Todd, 'Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass* 4.4 (2006), p. 726.

### **How national, rather than local, was the outlook of police-led clubs?**

Having established the historiography of working-class cultures with a view to understanding the complexity of such cultures within the local communities in which police-led clubs were situated, it is interesting to question how national rather than local the outlook of the clubs were in order to gauge the nature of the relationship between the clubs and working-class cultures. In order to do this it is speculated upon what sort of relationship the police-led clubs may have had with the NABC and how the influence of Chief Constables effected the outlook of the clubs.

In the previous chapter, it was established that the NABC was created in mid 1920s and disseminated their ideas through their journal *The Boy*, annual reports, and publications such as Llewellyn Smith's *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*. In their publications they emphasised the need for local clubs to have a national outlook, indeed an international outlook. In their annual report for 1930-1931 the NABC acknowledged that boys' clubs could create 'an intense local tradition... where loyalty remains as long as life lasts and where the Club has influenced the whole neighbourhood.' They added, 'loyalty to an individual Club' was 'not enough' and 'through Federations' clubs could be 'led on to civic loyalty' and 'taught a unity of purpose and ideals.' Also, boys' club members 'must be inspired with a feeling of brotherhood towards boys throughout the Empire and throughout the world.'<sup>151</sup> It is likely that police-led boys' clubs were, to some extent, influenced by the NABC as there is evidence that at least some police clubs were members of the organisation. In 1938, for example, their annual report listed four police-led boys' clubs along with number of members and contact details. Interestingly, the numbers of members of each club were high in comparison to other clubs listed in the annual report. Hyde Lads' Club had 345 members, Lancaster Lads' Club 528, Scarborough Boys' Club 204, while Norwich possessed a massive 11,707 members.<sup>152</sup> Norwich Lads' Club could be described as an example of a club that in the words of the NABC created 'an intense local tradition'. Its sheer size alone must have had a profound impact on the local community. Whether it inspired feelings of civic nationalism and

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<sup>151</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Fourteen to Eighteen: The Critical Years of Boyhood, Annual Report, 1930-1*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1931, pp. 12-13.

<sup>152</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Annual Report, 1938*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1938, pp 11-45.

imperialism is less easy to quantify, especially as the club at Norwich was not above conflict with the NABC. In 1945 the association withdrew its affiliation with the boys' club after Norwich refused to end its policy of free membership, as the NABC required that all its clubs charge a small membership fee for all boys. In a letter to the NABC written by Dain's successor as Chief Constable, Alan Plume, (Dain retired in 1943) their position was stridently put:

It is felt that Norwich Lads' Club owes much of its success to the fact that no subscriptions are charged the members. The fact that 30,000 boys have passed through the Club and the list of successes in all fields of sport speak for themselves.<sup>153</sup>

However, not long after, Norwich re-affiliated with the NABC when they decided to start charging a fee of 1 penny per attendance in 1952, in response to needing to repay debts incurred by the Club's rebuilding in 1951.<sup>154</sup> The experience of Norwich indicates that the influence of Chief Constable Dain on the club overrode that of the NABC.

As has been demonstrated in Chapter Two: Chief Constables were supporting the boys' club movement across the nation during the interwar period. Charles and Lillian Russell's history of the lads' club movement published in 1932 provides an excellent snapshot of police involvement in boys' clubs during the interwar period. Chief Constables across two hundred 'important towns and boroughs' were surveyed by the authors and found to support the clubs as an antidote to juvenile delinquency. The Russells highlighted the towns and cities where Chief Constables (or former Chief Constables) were directly involved in the clubs in some way, which included Rochester, Scarborough, Canterbury, Brighton, Huddersfield, Winchester, Hove, Hereford, Hyde, Walsall and, of course, Norwich.<sup>155</sup> Chief Constable support for boys' clubs may have been a national phenomenon, but it does not mean that all police-led boys' club were run in the same way. Individual Chief Constables had immense local influence. Historian Barbara Weinberger on writing about Chief Constables argues that 'the extent of the autonomous power and influence of these men throughout the period (1930s-1960s) can hardly be

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<sup>153</sup> Norwich Lads' Club Papers, file SO 182/53, 819X7, Norwich Lads' Club Correspondence with the NABC, 1945-1983.

<sup>154</sup> Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, pp. 30-35.

<sup>155</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 250-257.

sufficiently stressed...Thus, Chief Constable Dain was able to focus the attention of his force on work with juveniles in the police Lads' Club.'<sup>156</sup>

There are several factors at play here: debate about boys' clubs may have existed at a national level amongst Chief Constables but they would have been free to establish clubs in the manner they chose within their local jurisdiction; also they could have been influenced by the publications of the NABC and, or, that of Dain. On the one hand, the particularism of the Chief Constables, especially a character like Dain, may have given their clubs a very local outlook. On the other hand, they may have been influenced by ideas disseminated at a national level. It seems most likely that the outlook of police-led clubs would have incorporated a variety of factors, Chief Constables may have been aware of the complexity of the working-class communities in which the clubs functioned while drawing inspiration from what was happening elsewhere in the nation.

### **What motivated low-ranking police officers to volunteer in the clubs?**

The outlook of the police-led boys' clubs would have also been influenced by the low-ranking working-class police officers who ran them on a daily basis. Police Constables and Sergeants volunteered in their spare time, even giving up their annual leave to help out at club camps, so it is interesting to speculate what motivated their involvement with the clubs. In order to do this the work of historians looking at the characteristics of police officers and the day-to-day experience of policing is explored, alongside what contemporaries involved in the wider boys' club movement said about the ideal characteristics of a club leader. After which, a detailed look at the example of two police officers who were involved in running Manchester City Police Lads' Club, is taken.

In the 1970s historian Robert D. Storch identified one role of the Victorian policeman in Northern England as that of 'domestic missionary', conveying 'the eyes and ears of ruling elites at the very centers of working-class daily life' and providing a mode of 'surveillance of the streets and recreational centers of working-class districts' that 'would ultimately be applied 'to twentieth-century police work as well.'<sup>157</sup> A decade later historian S.J. Davies argued in response that although in certain periods, for instance '1839-45' and

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<sup>156</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 56.

<sup>157</sup> Robert D. Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880', *Journal of Social History* 9.4 (1976), p. 496.



‘1855-69’, the police had been ‘used by a section of the Manchester elite to attack certain cultural practices’ deemed ‘immoral such as prostitution, vagrancy and begging, drunkenness and gambling’ after 1870 the role of policeman as ‘domestic missionary’ lessened. However, he adds: ‘Increasingly, the police were seen as the agents of community self-discipline, the means whereby the urban community controlled its delinquent members...Crime had come to be seen by rulers and ruled as the prerogative of a small, peculiar group.’<sup>158</sup> In addition to this, Carolyn Steedman has noted, with reference to the Victorian policeman, that ‘many policemen did find in policing a patient religiosity, a useable idea of service, is one of the reasons why an understanding of nineteenth-century policing and policemen can lead to an analysis of stoicism as a means of self-assertion, and self-identification, and sometimes, of defiance.’<sup>159</sup> Thus, in the late nineteenth century the role of the policeman in the working-class community may have been quasi-religious as he acted as an agent of ‘self-discipline’, with concepts of ‘stoicism’ and ‘service’ forming part of his identity. Turning to the interwar period, it is interesting to consider if these elements continued to be in evidence, but first it is useful to explore the day-to-day experience of the officer on the beat during that period as illustrated by historians such as Joanne Klein and Barbara Weinberger.

Klein has explored in detail the reality of day-to-day policing in the interwar period and that the majority of police officers were from working-class backgrounds is underlined by her work. Klein focuses on the everyday lives and concerns of working-class police officers and their place within the working-class neighbourhood. Tensions regarding noise levels, space and privacy flared challenging notions of masculinity and respectability for both the police and their neighbours.<sup>160</sup> Klein’s work illustrates the individual lives of ordinary Police Constables in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool and details force expectations and duties, internal force relationships, relationships between Constables their public and domestic life, and the ‘multifarious duties’ they were expected to carry out on a day-to-day basis.<sup>161</sup> Police work as an

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<sup>158</sup> S. J. Davies, ‘Classes and Police in Manchester, 1829-1880’, in Alan Kidd and K. W. Roberts (eds), *City, Class and Culture: Studies in Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985, pp. 39-40.

<sup>159</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The formation of English provincial police forces, 1856-80*, London: Routledge, 1984, p. 163.

<sup>160</sup> Klein, ‘“Moving on”’, pp. 407-422.

<sup>161</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*.

occupation became more attractive from the pre-war period to 1930s as conditions and pay improved; Police Constables were less likely to leave or get into disciplinary trouble and the role was recognised as a more permanent occupation. Police Constables received formal and informal training and frequently had to use their discretion. 'Policing was a curious mixture of boredom and excitement, solitude and company, independence and restrictions...But strange as the combination of impossible expectations could be a growing number of working-class men found policing agreeable enough to wear the uniform.'<sup>162</sup>

Klein has also written about the day-to-day reality of police officers interacting with youths in the working-class community. Young men standing on street corners, and causing an obstruction were a very common phenomenon in working-class areas, and these groups had a role in the community as a means of socialising and passing on information; the Constables themselves may have been participants in such groups when they were younger, hence their ambivalence towards moving them on. Consequently, some officers made special arrangements with the corner groups, asking them to move to the kerb when any police officers (especially high-ranking ones) were in view, not caring if they moved back afterwards. Similar leniency was expressed, at times, towards boys stealing apples from gardens, buying cigarettes, or playing football in the street: activities which the Constables may have indulged in themselves, as children, as members of the working-class community.<sup>163</sup>

Hence the role of the Police Constable in the interwar period incorporated many duties. Constables were often pragmatic when dealing with youths and knew how to use discretion. Though policing could be boring, physically demanding and even dangerous, on occasion, the job was seen as an increasingly attractive profession. However, the profession did have its limitations. Weinberger argues, in her survey of police officers from the 1930s-1960s, that although technically any police officer could rise through the ranks to the highest posts, promotions were seen as 'governed by chance, by favouritism and by the personal predilections of senior officers who held the PCs fate in their

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<sup>162</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, p. 316.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 52-54.

hands.’<sup>164</sup> The fact that a police officer’s efforts were not necessarily rewarded by promotion suggests that the elements of ‘self-discipline’, ‘stoicism’ and ‘service’ highlighted earlier as characteristics of the late nineteenth century policeman may have persisted into the twentieth century. Volunteering in a boys’ club could have been a path to promotion, especially if it was the ‘pet’ project of a high-ranking officer. Equally, involvement in such clubs may have also been conducted out of an almost religious sense of serving the community.

Any Police Constable seeking direction on how he should conduct himself when volunteering in a boys’ club could consult Basil Henriques and the NABC for inspiration. In his 1937 *Metropolitan Police College Journal* article Henriques urged police officers to lead ‘physical and other activities’ in boys’ clubs so that ‘they could greatly help in the inculcation of good manners and good temper which characterizes the English police today.’<sup>165</sup> In his 1951 text *Club Leadership To-day* (which updated his influential 1933 work *Club Leadership*) he proposed that club leaders should run the clubs as a vocation contributing to the welfare of the country and the glory of God. Moreover, they should establish an atmosphere of discipline that, like that of the home, is based on tradition rather than rules. Accordingly ‘the adult leader or helper in a club such as this is like an older brother.’<sup>166</sup> Leaders and club helpers were urged to seek to know the characters of the boys in their charge rather than simply knowing about them. Their relationship must be based on friendship and sharing ‘with one another their common interests, their enthusiasm for all forms of athletics and games, their cultural endeavours, their love of creative art and their aspirations to realise their spiritual ideals’.<sup>167</sup> He highlighted the best characteristics of the club leader as being ‘simple, unselfish and idealistic’: someone who was prepared to accept sacrifices to their leisure time, yet would be rewarded by ‘enrichment of their own characters and in the happiness that they themselves will derive from the club.’<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 60.

<sup>165</sup> Basil L. Q. Henriques, ‘Boys Clubs in Relation to Delinquency’, *Metropolitan Police College Journal* 3 (1937), p. 207.

<sup>166</sup> Basil Henriques, *Club Leadership To-Today*, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 3-4.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

The NABC's annual report for 1934-1935 emphasised the necessity for the club leader to be a practical person who supported not only the boys in the club but the families they hailed from:

The work of the modern Club touches almost every side of social welfare and because he is not a theorist but a practical worker, the Leader brings to the problem a humanity and understanding which make him a very real but hard-worked friend, not only of the boys but of their families.<sup>169</sup>

The notion that club leaders helped not just the boys but their families, but were allied to the concept of 'social welfare' indicates that the clubs aspired to influence, for the good, the working-class community as a whole. Historian John Welshman argues that in the interwar period the British underclass was viewed by some social reformers as the 'social problem group' and the NABC's desire to positively influence families and wider society through their work with boys fits into this concept. The concept of the 'social problem group' also had a darker side as it was also constructed in relation to 'the solution of sterilization' advocated by the Eugenics Society.<sup>170</sup>

Like Henriques, R.T Thorton, who wrote a book on how to found a boys' club for the NABC in 1932, suggested an 'elder brother' model for setting the tone of the club, saying the club leader 'should be old enough to have more experience than his eldest boys, but young enough to join in the activities of the club.'<sup>171</sup> Thorton added that he need not 'be a man of brilliant gifts or of a wide education...He must be dependable rather than brilliant, and capable rather than clever.'<sup>172</sup> Therefore, club leaders were seen as not particularly intellectual, but motivated instead by religious or spiritual sensibilities. They were encouraged to establish an environment for club activities based on friendship and respect for an 'older' or 'elder brother' rather than harsh discipline, and though their participation in the clubs would be time consuming they would be rewarded by their own self-improvement. To establish how far these ideal characteristics could have been united within the character of the interwar Police Constable it is fascinating to examine in detail

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<sup>169</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Youth and the Future, Annual Report, 1934-1935*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1935, pp. 8-9.

<sup>170</sup> Welshman, *Underclass*, loc 1896 of 9256.

<sup>171</sup> R.T. Thorton, *How to Found a Boys' Club*, London: The National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1932, p. 5.

<sup>172</sup> H. Justin Evans, *First Steps in Club Leadership: A Guide for Boys' Club Leaders*, London: The National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1947.

the experience of two police officers who volunteered at Manchester City Police Lads' club.

All the officers who volunteered in their spare-time and were involved in the day-to-day running of Manchester City Police Lads' Club were from working-class backgrounds. This is indicated by their occupations before they joined the force, as cited in the force's appointments register. The physical training and gymnastics instructors PCs Norman Baker, George Henry Wheaton, George William Peters and George Langton were respectively soldier, butcher, army bandsman and labourer; the boxing instructors Robert Shorthouse and Arthur Davenport had worked as a railway clerk and a woodturner; swimming and life training instructors William Whitworth and John Hanson as caulker and coil-winder; and first-aiders Thomas Peter Smith, Donald Weston, George Woodhall and John Henry Dovey had originally worked as a piecer, a plumber, a miner and a shop assistant. The average age of the Police Constables who assisted at the club was 31, with ages ranging between 25 and 40, making them, in words of Thorton above, 'old enough to have more experience than his eldest boys, but young enough to join in the activities of the club.' The high-ranking officers on the club's management committee were also from working-class backgrounds as their occupations on joining the police had included farm hand, quarryman, miner, and railway shunter. Indeed, Alexander Aberdein, the club's founder, had previously worked as a tinsmith.<sup>173</sup>

This was likely to have made all the officers involved in the clubs, to quote the NABC, 'practical workers', who were empathetic to the working-class backgrounds of the club members. PCs Tom Doody and Norman Baker were two such working-class police officers engaging in a project to aid the local working-class community. It is useful to briefly review the recorded evidence of their lives as police officers and their involvement in the lads' club at Manchester in order to explore the motivations behind their endeavours.

Tom Doody was born circa 1905 in Shewsbury and joined Manchester City Police in 1928, before which he had worked as a clerk. He was honorary secretary of Manchester

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<sup>173</sup> GMPMA, Manchester City Police Appointment Register 1901 to 1942; GMPMA, Doody, T., *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes*, 1937-1940, Minutes of Meeting of Committee of Management Held Mill Street Station, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1937.

City Police Lads' Club throughout its life from 1937-1942 and took the minutes of its meetings. Doody remained a Constable throughout his service with Manchester City Police (he retired in 1958) in order that he could focus upon charitable pursuits and his work with the Police Federation. At the time of his retirement he was awarded a British Empire Medal in recognition of his work. He was described in a 1958 newspaper clipping as 'just about the finest policeman we have ever had in the Manchester force. He has dedicated his whole life to the service of policemen and their widows and orphans.'<sup>174</sup> In April 1937, five months before the inauguration of Manchester City Police Lads' Club, Canon Paton Williams addressed the Manchester and Salford branch of the International Christian Police Association (ICPA) with the following words:

The thing to strive for is not goody goodness – not emotionalism, but pure manliness, to be strong in the strength which God supplies. Weak men are those who yield to every temptation and go under. On the beat or any other duty you must always give evidence that God is the master of your life – and you will have a character that stands all tests.<sup>175</sup>

It is impossible to know whether Tom Doody attended the ICPA meeting, but the tone of the speech provides insight into what may have motivated Doody's involvement with the lads' club. Doing his Christian duty, harnessing his 'manliness' and strength of character may have been wrapped up with his masculine identity, as a respectable working-class man. The concept of 'manliness' is central to the boys' club movement and is explored in detail in Chapter Five. When Doody died in 1987 numerous subscriptions were raised to provide him with a memorial. One of the subscribers was an old boy from the lads' club, named Ron Hepworth, who wrote:

Tom was a long standing friend who made a great impression on my youth through his efforts in Boys Clubs when few existed during the war years.  
At Mill Street Police Station the gymnasium was open to us where we were allowed the facilities for training.  
Several members of the Police helped, including the late George Peters another person we looked up to as a friend of the youngsters.  
On returning from Burma I met Tom again and he was there to offer advice on my future...  
I shall always remember him as a great friend and almost like an elder brother who one could trust and seek advice.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> GMPMA, Appointment Register; GMPMA, *Meeting Minutes*; GMPMA, 'A' Box T. Doody, Newspaper cutting, 'Finest P.c. in the city', circa 1958; GMPMA, 'A' Box T. Doody, Newspaper cutting, 'Tom Doody B.E.M.', circa 1958; GMPMA, 'A' Box T. Doody, Newspaper cutting, 'Tom Doody B.E.M.', National Association of Retired Police Officers, Quarterly Bulletin, No. 122 Spring, 1987.

<sup>175</sup> 'Manchester and Salford Branch', *On and Off Duty*, April 1937, p. 170.

<sup>176</sup> GMPMA, 'A' Box T. Doody, Memorial subscription letter from Ron Hepworth to Mr Griffiths, 21 Aug, 1987.

In the letter Ron Hepworth unconsciously echoed the sentiments expressed in Manchester City Police Lads' Club's Annual Report for 1938-39 which stressed that the boys 'above all must have as leaders men who, no matter what their actual age, can play the role of decent elder brother to all their lads and keep in line with their development.'<sup>177</sup> These sentiments, in turn, echoed the ideal club leader characteristics cited by Henriques and the NABC. Hepworth obviously felt that both Doody and George Peters (the latter had taught physical training and gymnastics at the club) were 'friends' and 'elder brothers' that he could look up to. Hepworth's letter is evidence that this particular aim of the club was fulfilled with regards to at least one member.

In contrast to Doody's example was the chequered career of Norman Baker. Baker, born in 1904, joined Manchester City Police in March 1931. He was an ex-soldier (of eight years) from South Moreton in Berkshire. In September 1933 he passed his Sergeant's exam and was promoted to Sergeant in 1938, a year after the club was founded. He was the club leader probably due to his role as physical training and drill instructor to Manchester City Police from 1931-1942. In November 1941 he passed the Inspector's exam. However, in March 1943 he was reduced to the lowest class of Sergeant due to being found unfit for duty through drink. The following July he was demoted to the rank of Constable after 'acting in a manner prejudicial to discipline' by encouraging his Constables to accept free drinks from a local pub while on duty. Things improved a year later in July 1945 when he was 'presented with the certificate of the Royal Humane Society for attempting to save a life from drowning'. In September 1952 he applied to become a physical training and drill instructor at Bruge, the police training college, but there is no evidence he was successful. The low point of his career, however, was when he was interviewed in August 1953 (the same year he received Long Service and Good Conduct medal) regarding the alleged sexual assault of a cleaner working at the section house where he worked. For many weeks he had allegedly attempted to kiss her when alone with her in the section house and succeeded on two occasions, the final occasion locking her in the building: the ensuing struggle resulting in her scratching her wrist on his watch strap. She professed to being petrified of him and not wanting to be alone with him when the mornings became darker. Baker denied the allegations inferring that

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<sup>177</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, Manchester: Brunswick Press, 1939, p. 6.

someone wanted to get him in to trouble.<sup>178</sup> However, the Inspector who handled the case felt differently and he wrote to the Chief Constable:

I am satisfied that there is truth in the complaint but as there is no corroboration and the reluctance of Mrs Dixon to pursue the matter you may approve that no further action be taken. Constable Baker will be moved coincidental with other changes on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.<sup>179</sup>

In January 1954 with a sudden change in appearance, complaining of headaches, dizziness and weight loss Baker was diagnosed with neurasthenia and deemed 'not fit for efficient discharge of his duties and on account of emotional instability.' They added 'this condition is likely to be permanent.'<sup>180</sup> He was pensioned off in April of that year. The 1943 and 1944 incidents of misconduct were expunged in 1953, and his Certificate of Service was recorded as 'very good'.<sup>181</sup>

The profiles of Doody and Baker present two radically different characters who worked side by side and contributed significantly to club life. Doody appeared to be someone motivated by either Christian or civic duty, someone who wanted to contribute to society and whose efforts were awarded with the British Empire Medal. In this respect, he followed the NABC's concept of ideal club leader, someone who was not particularly intellectual but was an 'older brother' role model rewarded by his own 'self-improvement': Doody remained a Constable throughout his service with the police. Baker, on the other hand, was a complex character. His service record is full of various certificates he achieved in ambulance, life-saving, swimming, efficiency, Morse code, anti-gas, small arms, first aid, reconnaissance, civil defence and rescue training. He

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<sup>178</sup> GMPMA, Appointment Register; GMPMA, Manchester City Police Lads' Club Papers, Alexander Aberdeen, Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, 1937-1942, 'Kicking His Heels for Fun', *Evening News*, 17 November 1937; Constable B59, GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Norman Cedric Baker, Record of Service, 1930-1954; GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Constable B59, Norman Cedric Baker, Record of Misconduct, 1943-1953; GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Herbert Morrison, Order of the Secretary of State for the Home Department Under the Police (Appeals) Acts, 1927 and 1943, 7 Sept. 1944; GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Report of Occurrences, B Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Section House, B59 Norman C. Baker to Superintendent B Division, Re. Appointment to Drill Instructor, 29 Sept. 1952; GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Report of Occurrences, B Division, Dixon Street Section Station, Statement by Alice Dixon, 14 Aug. 1953; GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Report of Occurrences, B Division, Willert Street Station, Inspector A.G. Rose to Superintendent B Division, 17 Aug. 1953.

<sup>179</sup> GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Report of Occurrences, B Division, Willert Street Station, Superintendent B Division to the Chief Constable, 18 Aug. 1953.

<sup>180</sup> GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Doctor's note, T. H. Blench, Police Surgeon, Re. Constable B59 Norman C. Baker, 28 Jan. 1954.

<sup>181</sup> GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Constable B59, Norman Cedric Baker, Record of Service, 1930-1954.



passed both the Sergeant and Inspector exams.<sup>182</sup> Possibly his involvement in the club led to his promotion to Sergeant. Interestingly, a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 1937, complaining about a crying child, doors banging and shouting coming from the Baker household was dismissed by Aberdein as malicious.<sup>183</sup> Did Baker use his work with the club as a way to utilise, to use Weinberger's phrasing, the 'favouritism' and the 'personal predilections of senior officers'?<sup>184</sup> Baker emerges from his file as an intelligent yet chaotic man who lacked 'self-discipline'. Possibly, given his incidents of misconduct, and his diagnosis of neurasthenia he suffered from alcoholism and expressed his masculinity through the physicality of the sportsman and the 'hard man' image of, the far less respectable, seasoned drinker. On the other hand, Baker may have also been motivated by a sense of civic duty to participate in the club just as much as Doody. Both men probably showed 'stoicism' and were invested in the idea of 'service': characteristics of policing that continued from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. A variety of factors may well have motivated Doody and Baker's involvement in the club ranging from religious or civic duty, the chance of promotion, the desire for self-improvement and even as a forum for masculine expression.

### **Combatting delinquency and deviance within the local community**

Having speculated upon what may have motivated working-class police officers to become involved in the day-to-day running of the clubs it is interesting to turn to how their work was used to combat juvenile crime in the local working-class community. The relationship between police-led clubs and juvenile delinquency was explored in Chapter Two where it was argued that there was a great deal of optimism during the first half of the twentieth century about tackling juvenile delinquency. It was thought that if boys' natural energies could be diverted away from causing a nuisance on the streets, to the clubs, they could be converted into good citizens. Moreover, police-led boys' clubs were a way in which the police could deal directly with the problem of juvenile delinquency – a problem that they would have to deal with anyway – through preventative measures. The optimism regarding tackling juvenile delinquency was carried through to the police-

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<sup>182</sup> Norman Cedric Baker, Record of Service, 1930-1954.

<sup>183</sup> GMPMA, file J. 1930 Norman Cedric Baker, Anonymous letter to the Chief Constable, annotated by Alexander Aberdein, stamped 7 August 1937.

<sup>184</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, p. 60.

led clubs and local, regional and national newspapers felt confident in reporting their success. However, there is a further dimension to the relationship between the police-led clubs and juvenile delinquency which incorporates an element of ‘moral crusade’: there is evidence that police-led clubs were used in the local working-class community to combat sexual deviance. To fully explore this, it is useful first to briefly consider the history of the relationship between youth movements and juvenile crime, and the policing of sexual deviance, and to, highlight contemporary concerns about bad parenting and venereal disease, before investigating how police-led boys’ clubs responded to these concerns and viewed their own success.

By the end of the nineteenth century the way young people were viewed in society ‘had a marked effect on police enforcement of new moral standards, leading to a rising rate of arrests for certain non-indictable categories of juvenile crime.’<sup>185</sup> Increasingly, by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, even working-class youths were beginning to be seen as adolescents and in quite a different category to adults and therefore susceptible to influence through targeted youth movements. These movements acted as ‘instruments for the reinforcement of social conformity’ in combatting juvenile delinquency, which protected “‘legitimate” middle-class interests while, at the same time, making sufficient provisions for working-class leisure.’<sup>186</sup> Although on the decline during the 1920s, juvenile crime increased in the 1930s and peaked during the Second World War.<sup>187</sup> During the interwar period some police saw the increase in juvenile delinquency as the result of ‘an inevitable behavioural response to excessive leniency in the modes of juvenile justice and coincidental decay in parental authority in the home.’<sup>188</sup> This view was held by Dain who wrote, ‘it should be the parent who...guides the boy into good citizenship and worthy manhood. But in the slum areas...of our big cities, that kind of wholesome home atmosphere is too often absent.’<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*, Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1977, p. 15.

<sup>186</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 16.

<sup>187</sup> Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900*, Harlow: Longman, 2011, p 63.

<sup>188</sup> Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914-1948*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 165.

<sup>189</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 22.

Historian Roger Davidson has noted that from the late nineteenth century, venereal disease ‘in many countries became a metaphor for physical and moral decay, for the forces of pollution and contamination that appeared to threaten the institutions of social order and racial progress.’<sup>190</sup> It is hardly surprising, then, that combatting sexual deviance and its consequences, in the form of the contraction of venereal disease, became an integral part of combatting juvenile delinquency. As Tamara Myers has pointed out, sexually deviant boys, unlike girls, were perceived as saveable, potentially good citizens, as they could theoretically control their actions given the correct discipline.<sup>191</sup> In addition, Susan Lemar has shown, in the case of 1920s Edinburgh, voluntary measures were seen as the best way to deal with venereal disease.<sup>192</sup> Therefore, the voluntary boys’ club movement was seen as tackling sexual deviance through teaching self-control and good citizenship.

The patterns and concerns revealed by the historians above are reflected by the contemporary champions of the boys’ club movement. There were concerns about the increase in rates of juvenile delinquency after both World Wars. Robert Peacock, Chief Constable of Manchester City Police between 1898 and 1926, in a speech on juvenile crime delivered circa 1917 detailed the causes of juvenile crime as:

The War, fathers away, Mothers engaged in War work, Artificial and uncertain conditions, cinemas, Pernicious Literature, and greatest of all lack of home instruction in religious essentials, and want of parental control.

He went on to cite boys’ clubs as a possible answer, proclaiming:

We have arrived at that period when preventative measures should be framed to meet and suppress it...it is our duty to turn them off the Streets, by finding healthy and suitable recreation and employment.<sup>193</sup>

Henriques echoed this after the Second World War. Like Peacock he referenced ‘fathers away’ (and older brothers) and its direct effects as one of the main causes of the increase

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<sup>190</sup> Roger Davidson, ‘Venereal Disease, Sexual Morality and Public Health in Interwar Scotland’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5.2 (1994), p. 267.

<sup>191</sup> Tamara Myers, ‘Embodying Delinquency: Boys’ Bodies, Sexuality, and Juvenile Justice History in Early-Twentieth-Century Quebec’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14.4 (2005), pp. 383-414.

<sup>192</sup> Susan Lemar, ‘“The Liberty to Spread Disaster”: Campaigning for Compulsion in the Control of Venereal Diseases in Edinburgh in the 1920s’, *Social History of Medicine* 19.1 (2006), p. 84.

<sup>193</sup> GMPMA, ‘A’ Box Robert Peacock Pirnie Bequest, ‘The Welfare, Moral and Physical of the Child’, circa 1917.

in juvenile delinquency in the immediate post-war years. Further causes, he added, included: schooling interrupted by wartime evacuation, the rise in divorce, decline in religious education and 'class hatred'.<sup>194</sup> He also cited boys' clubs as the answer by establishing their purpose arguing that they were crucial in preventing 'juvenile delinquency by providing opportunities for the right use of leisure, to transform the anti-social gangs into teams working and living for the welfare of society' adding that the emphasis should be upon 'preparing boys for life through social education'.<sup>195</sup>

Thus, boys' clubs, during the interwar period, were seen as a positive way to tackle juvenile delinquency and its attendant problems such as sexual deviance, which had resulted from a host of social problems including bad parenting. The clubs were seen as a real instrument of social education working directly within the working-class community. Police-led clubs were certainly no different in this and they conformed to the aims of the wider boys' club movement in their social work. Moreover, they believed their work had tangible results.

His success was upheld by the Russells who wrote in 1932 that Norwich Lads' Club was 'most remarkable, even amazing' not only preventing juvenile crime but improving the health of the local area:

While it is not claimed that the whole of the great reduction in juvenile crime in Norwich is due to the club, its reduction almost to non-existence is notably greater in Norwich than the general reduction due to general causes throughout the country; and every competent local observer of the facts is agreed in attributing this result very largely to the work of the Lads' Club, and the good relations it has created as between the Police and the public. No less great, it is said, has been the benefit to the health of the city observed since the club was opened. The doctor mainly responsible for the work of combatting V.D. regards it as one of the greatest aids in his work for the eradication of such disease.<sup>196</sup>

Consequently Norwich Lads' Club, in conforming to the boys' club ideals of good citizenship and self-control, aimed to have a very real effect on the physical health of discrete members of the local community. Such ideals permeated thinking at the time and were upheld by the police as well as the boys' club movement, VD was discussed at great length, for example, during the meeting of the Chief Constables' Association a

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<sup>194</sup> Henriques, *Club Leadership To-day*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 255-256.

decade earlier in June 1920.<sup>197</sup> Russell's belief that the activities at Norwich directly led to a reduction in cases of VD allied physical fitness with moral fitness. Moreover, such a point of view did not depart from interwar notions of social engineering and positive eugenics that aimed to improve human stock by eradicating disease and deviant practices.

Thus, police-led boys' clubs were seen as a positive way to directly intervene within the local working-class community in order to combat juvenile delinquency and sexual deviance, by teaching good citizenship and self-control. However, in doing so, they were also policing the morals of the working-class community. The working-class officers who participated in the day-to-day running of the clubs were encouraged by their superior officers to be directly involved in improving the tone of their own community through their service in the police clubs. Moreover, these superior officers felt confident in citing evidence of the success of their clubs in reducing juvenile delinquency.

### **The significance of the police boys' club in the working-class community**

Having reviewed what police-led clubs were aiming to do in the local working-class community it is important to place them into context with other social institutions. To explore the significance of the police-led boys' club in the local working-class community the following section will focus upon the clubs in relation to other social institutions such as the church or the public house, the challenges that the clubs may have faced from alternative leisure pursuits and through better state provision, and how the clubs functioned as a service to the community.

With regards to the social institution of the church, historian Dorothy Entwistle argues that even with declining attendance it remained a significant factor in working-class daily life in the first three decades of the twentieth century, in the form of 'diffused Christianity.' Moreover, the 'interweaving of work, religion, and politics' created 'distinctive working-class cultures.'<sup>198</sup> Church attendance alone did not describe the reach of Christianity into working-class life 'as the presence, activities, and social support

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<sup>197</sup> 'The Treatment of Venereal Disease', 18 June 1920, p. 296.

<sup>198</sup> Dorothy Entwistle, ' "Hope, Colour, and Comradeship": Loyalty and Opportunism in Early Twentieth-Century Church attendance Among the Working Class in North-West England', *The Journal of Religious History* 25.1 (2001), p. 21.

of so many religious institutions in the community affected even those who rarely went to church.<sup>199</sup> She adds that there was loyal and active participation in the church, but also opportunists who sought social gatherings or charitable support. For all ‘the roles which church members played extended their opportunities...as well as providing a ready-made social group bound by shared values.’<sup>200</sup> Consequently, although church attendance declined during the period under investigation it still influenced the working-class community albeit in subtle ways.

Another social institution that witnessed declining attendance during the first half of the twentieth century was that of the public house. By the 1930s, alcohol consumption in England was less than half of what it had been during the First World War. Unsurprisingly heavy drinking and convictions for drunkenness also fell in that decade. The interwar period saw public houses challenged by alternative leisure pursuits such as cinema going, and slum clearances removed many pubs.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, the movement for the improvement of the public house gathered steam. It aimed to create ‘a place of sweetness and light where you may sit with your friends or your wife and family and be surrounded...by quiet people who are passing a leisure hour in a reputable place of general refreshment’, and originated in ‘the pre-war Progressive faith in rational solutions to society’s ills.’<sup>202</sup> Inspired by this philosophy committed brewers such as Whitbread built new public houses in a number of towns and cities across England including Norwich, often in a Neo-Tudor or Neo-Georgian style.<sup>203</sup>

In order to better understand the challenges to club attendance it is interesting to explore the ‘alternative leisure pursuits’ that were also drawing young people away from pubs. Andrew Davies in his research into working-class culture in Salford has highlighted the attractions of the cinema which ‘was without a doubt the most popular form of commercial leisure among young people.’ Moreover, he argues ‘despite the growth of cinema, communal, or informal leisure activities accounted for most of the leisure time of young workers’, such as ‘corner gangs’ (mainly boys) who gathered on the streets on

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<sup>199</sup> Entwistle, “Hope, Colour, and Comradeship”, p. 21.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>201</sup> Paul Jennings, *The Local: A History of the English Pub*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2007, pp. 193-195.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, p. 197.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, p. 199.

weekday evenings passing time simply through ‘talk’ and the Sunday evening ‘monkey parades’ where youths of both sexes promenaded and courted one another.<sup>204</sup>

With regards to the state, new legislation had a direct effect on the lives of young people. The 1944 Education Act and the Children Act, for example, were two of the most significant acts to effect the daily lives of children in the twentieth century. The 1944 Education Act was a ‘highly significant moment in educational history’, because for the first time it clearly distinguished between primary and secondary education, made better provision for further education, removed 5-14 elementary schooling and raised school leaving age from 14 to 15.<sup>205</sup> The 1948 Children Act, ‘arguably the most important child care-related statutory milestone in of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’, moved away from the Poor Law to the Welfare State, radically reforming provision for children by creating dedicated childcare professionals such as Children Officers and focusing upon the individual needs of the child in order to enable ‘the proper development of his character and abilities.’<sup>206</sup> Therefore, young workers were older and theoretically better educated when they entered the working world and new childcare professionals were available to focus upon the welfare of young people without the distraction of other responsibilities.

Finally, before turning to what contemporary commentators had to say about clubs within the context established above it is important to note Selina Todd’s suggestion that working-class communities used ‘self-help networks’ and ‘powerful others’ to negotiate the vagaries of working-class life in the twentieth century. She argues that most working-class people ‘did not understand themselves to be living on the margins’ and although their levels of relative poverty and prosperity could vary dramatically they remained ‘important as breadwinners, (and) parents’ and functioned ‘within self-help networks’ such as ‘trade unions, friendly societies or women’s friendship networks.’ In addition, working-class experience was not only ‘closely related to productive relations but also

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<sup>204</sup> Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-Class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-1939*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, pp. 94-103.

<sup>205</sup> C. H. Batterson, ‘The 1944 Education Act Reconsidered’, *Educational Review* 51.1 (1999), p. 5.

<sup>206</sup> Caroline Ball, ‘Regulating child care: from the Children Act 1948 to the present’, *Child and Family Social Work* 3 (1998), pp. 163-164.

was shaped by reading, writing, relations with powerful others outside the workplace as well as by family lore and public memory.’<sup>207</sup>

The context that boys’ clubs and indeed police-led boys’ clubs sat within was complex, contradictory and multi-dimensional. Church attendance was declining but still provided activities and support for the local working-class community. Pub attendance was also in decline and the new gentrified pubs were aimed at ‘better off’ working-class families. Working-class youths who could afford it frequented cinemas, those who could not turned to the street as the forum of their leisure activities. At the very least, after the Education Act of 1918 that raised school leaving age to 14 young people could benefit from a better, longer education and the support of dedicated professionals, such as teachers and medical professionals, derived from outside the working-class community, who were concerned about their wellbeing. Such ‘powerful others’ added to the assistance derived from within the working-class community through ‘self-help networks’ and self-improvement.

Before turning to how police-led clubs viewed religion, alternative leisure pursuits and challenges to club attendance, it is fascinating to review what contemporary commentators such as Henriques and Llewellyn Smith had to say about these subjects, alongside the views of Pearl Jephcott, a prominent figure in the girls’ club movement, who wrote about the challenges club organisers faced. There were contemporary commentators that upheld the central importance of Christianity with regards to boys’ clubs, but there was also those who voiced a far more pragmatic view. Henriques maintained the continuing importance of religious observance within the boys’ club movement and that ‘those who are running boys’ clubs believe that religion is the basis upon which human character can best be built.’<sup>208</sup> He repeated that the NABC Religious Commission established in 1944 reported that ‘it was the duty of every club leader to see that his members had every opportunity to know the facts of Christian (or Jewish) faith, to realise their significance and to choose for themselves whether to accept or reject that faith as a basis for life.’<sup>209</sup> Moreover, any club that ignored completely the spiritual needs of its members were seen as ‘ignoring one of the main principles of the N.A.B.C.’<sup>210</sup> He

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<sup>207</sup> Todd, ‘Class, experience and Britain’s twentieth century’, p. 507.

<sup>208</sup> Henriques, *Club Leadership To-day*, p. 1.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p. 139.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, p. 303.



also recognised, from a secular point of view the positive impact of the 1944 Education Act that ensured that Local Authorities provided adequate leisure facilities for boys and girls aged 15-20 and encouraged the opening of youth centres and the Children Act of 1948 that created Children's Officers.<sup>211</sup>

Returning to the question of religion, however, Llewellyn Smith believed that 'the end of the War brought with it... a reaction both against anything of military appearance and against organised religion.' Indeed boys' clubs may only have been paying lip service to Christianity; in his 1935 survey of London life and labour he claimed that 'close on 80,000 boys from 8 to 21 in the London Survey area' belonged 'to one or other of the principal youth movements. And though each of these movements' claimed 'to be essentially religious, it is safe to say that encouragement to attend a place of worship' was 'not the sole object.'<sup>212</sup> Even the NABC warned, in their guidance on founding boys' clubs, that 'it is far from advisable to attempt to force religion down a boy's throat.' The NABC believed that religion was lying dormant within the boys as it was 'often stifled by the environment.' They argued that the spiritual dimension of club life should be 'adapted to circumstances' and should be as 'natural' as possible in its expression. Religious services were best if they were 'short', 'simple' and most importantly 'voluntary.'<sup>213</sup>

With regards to the challenges to the clubs offered by alternative leisure pursuits, amongst other issues, these were outlined in Pearl Jephcott's 1954 study entitled *Some Young People*. She interviewed almost one thousand boys and girls aged 14-17 in central London, Nottingham and rural Oxfordshire about why they 'did not think it worth their while to join any organization set up specifically for the enjoyment and welfare of adolescents in their neighbourhood'.<sup>214</sup> She concluded that for a young person to become an effective member of a formal group' it was 'a more complicated business for the adolescent than' was 'generally assumed.' She added that 'an uncommon amount of good-will and horse-sense' was necessary from both club organisers and members in

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid, p. vii.

<sup>212</sup> Hubert Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour – Volume IX Life and Leisure*, London: P.S. King & Son LTD, 1935, p. 141.

<sup>213</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *A Guide to Starting a Boys' Club and Hints on its Management*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, date unknown, p. 12.

<sup>214</sup> Pearl Jephcott, *Some Young People*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954, p. 104.

order ‘to produce the active member’ and ‘the boy or girl who’ was an effective member of a youth group’ had ‘indeed accomplished something.’<sup>215</sup> Also, she highlighted other factors that prevented participation in youth organisations such as domestic responsibilities, commitment to hobbies or courting. The latter often causing ‘technical difficulties’ if ‘the organization to which the boy belonged might not be a mixed one.’<sup>216</sup> Also, clubs could be off-putting if held in run-down premises, by not offering provision for various hobbies and crafts, and by seeming generally old-fashioned. If they did not sense ‘current tastes,’ clubs could fail to ‘recognise the great weight that “modernity” carries in the average artisan home, symbolizing as it does those things that the working-class family of the past was only able to achieve by great self-sacrifice or by a fluke.’<sup>217</sup> Therefore, successful youth organisations were dependant on collaboration between members and organisers, meeting the challenge of alternative leisure activities and recognition of the upward mobility of working-class families. They were also wise to play down their religious motivations when necessary, relying on a more subtle approach to spirituality.

With regards to the police-led clubs themselves, it is also useful to explore their significance within the working-class community through their relationship with religion, alternative leisure activities, challenges to club attendance and how the clubs fitted into the idea of police ‘service’ to the community. The relationship between the police-led boys’ clubs and religion varied. Dain in his pamphlet on police welfare work, emphasised the moral benefits of club attendance while down-playing organised religion: he maintained that, ‘physical training is a school of continence and chastity. A society for the cultivation of morals would attain its end better by giving the youth a taste for gymnastics than by sermons.’<sup>218</sup> The club at Swansea, however, was well connected to the church. Swansea Boys’ Club had started life as Swansea Newsboys’ Club, a club founded by a Mrs. W.H. Michael in 1927. She was also the founder of a Christian mission and the boys’ club’s first premises was that of Trinity Church Hall. The police took over the running of the club in January 1933 under the direction of the Chief Constable F.J.

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, p. 106.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>218</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 19.

May. The club remained in the church hall until June of that year when it moved to a former print works.<sup>219</sup> Here the club had a direct connection with the church both in its original founder and its very first location. At Manchester, there was no explicit mention of religion. There is no reference at any point to religion within the club's annual reports, for example. However, as explored previously in the person of Tom Doody religion could be present in the clubs through the devotion of individuals. Active Christians such as Tom Doody ran the clubs on a daily basis as a service to society, but non-church going participants may have been acting out of an equal sense of service, originating in the 'diffused Christianity' of working-class cultures, or through left-wing secular views such as those expressed in the writings of police officer and journalist C.H. Rolph.<sup>220</sup>

Public houses, along with cinema and the more informal leisure pursuits centred upon street gatherings may have been a challenge to attendance at police-led clubs within the working-class community. Interestingly, the club at Norwich seemed allied with public houses in the city. Amongst the subscribers to Norwich Lads' Club were many public houses. In the card index of Norwich Lads' Club donations and subscriptions, a survey of subscribers between 1932-1952 (1932 being the start date of the index cards and 1952 being a year after my study ends, giving a full 20 year span) of contributors only with names beginning with A or B reveals 25 subscribers from public houses which is approximately 16% of all the subscribers listed.<sup>221</sup> The public house, that pillar of the local working-class community, was an unexpected contributor of philanthropic feeling to the lads' club, especially considering they were in competition with the clubs as a destination where working lads over 18 could spend their leisure hours. There may have been a variety of reasons for this. Subscriptions may have ensured a lenient attitude towards licensing; or they were in keeping with the post-First World War gentrification of the public house and the desire to provide a respectable environment for leisure as alternative to the street; or both pub and club represented traditional modes of working-class leisure in comparison to the modernity of film-going. Norwich may have been the exception that proved the rule with its many pub subscriptions. The club at Manchester

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<sup>219</sup> 'It started with the Newsboys' Club', *Evening Post* (Swansea), 11 December 1945, page unknown.

<sup>220</sup> 'Hewitt, Cecil Rolph [*pseud.* C.H. Rolph]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/55651>, accessed 24 November 2018.

<sup>221</sup> Norwich, Norfolk Record Office (henceforth NRO): Norwich Lads' Club Papers, file 820X3, Names A-C Card Index of Donations and Subscriptions, 1932-1975.

received no such donations. Its funding came mainly from high-ranking police officers, army and naval officers, councillors, and local businesses including builders, a removals company and two dairies.<sup>222</sup> Club funding is a fascinating topic, which is explored in detail in the following chapter.

State reforms may have challenged the traditional methods used to run the boys' clubs. The creation of dedicated childcare professionals, such as probation officers, could have challenged the suitability of police officers as youth workers.<sup>223</sup> The introduction of the higher school leaving age by the 1944 Education Act, for example, challenged the notion of working youth. The many alternatives to club attendance presented in the post-war period, possibly led to lessened police involvement in the clubs as they moved away from their original vision. By the 1950s police involvement in the running of Hyde Lads' Club and Norwich Lads' Club was taken over by civilian volunteers and paid youth workers.<sup>224</sup> At Swansea, in the early to mid 1930s 'about 60 officers helped out in their spare time', but as it grew more popular 'a permanent leader' was sought albeit 'his wages were met by weekly contributions by members of the Swansea Force' he was a youth worker rather than a police officer.<sup>225</sup> Consequently, the waning of the direct police involvement in boys' clubs may have resulted from a mixture of the declining commitment of club members and the rise of professionalism both within the police and the social services.

Christianity may have influenced the police-led boys' club in an implicit sense through the notion of service. For the ICPA, religion was fundamental to their concept of service. A *Times* correspondent reporting the Chief Constable of Northampton's address at the ICPA's annual meeting of 1936, recorded that the 'association believed that it was of the highest importance that policemen should be more than nominal Church-goers' as it would support them during 'these days of uncertainty and perplexity' and reinforce their role as public servants as they should use "service" rather than "force", because they were no longer the force, as they were known in the old days, but a service to serve their

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<sup>222</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9, Annual Report for the Year 1940-41, and Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1942*, Manchester: Warburton and Sons, 1942.

<sup>223</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 215.

<sup>224</sup> File DD346 Add 1/1, Hyde Lads' Club, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 1956-57*, Hyde: J. Andrew & Co. Ltd., 1957; *Norwich Lads' Club Diamond Jubilee 1918-1978*, Norwich: Norwich Lads Club, 1978, pp. 1-2.

<sup>225</sup> 'Takeover will not alter aims', *South Wales Evening Post*, 13 January 1966, page unknown.

neighbours as well as to look after the enemies of society.’<sup>226</sup> The theme of service to society was continued in a similar article in 1938 which stressed the ‘association seeks to place before men of the police forces a high ideal of life and service.’<sup>227</sup>

The idea of service to the community as part of the duty of the policeman, whether it was religious in expression or not, was compatible with police involvement in boys’ clubs. In commenting on the renovations and extensions carried out to the premises of Norwich Lads’ Club in 1936 the *Police Review* stated:

When the work is completed Norwich will have a building which will be a worthy monument to the new outlook on life and humane conception of their duties which the Norwich Police have displayed in recent years.<sup>228</sup>

The phrase ‘humane conception of their duties’ suggests that the lads’ club was an expression of social service that they felt was part of their work as police officers, and was just as relevant as their many other duties. Dain saw boys’ clubs as not only a way of tackling juvenile delinquency but as an example of the holistic service that the police rendered their local community:

In our primary duty, therefore, of keeping watch and ward over our districts, is it not evident that those services which we can render by which crime and unsocial conduct are prevented from arising, are services within the direct sphere of our duty, and that so far as we can help to initiate and foster them we are well and truly serving the basic purposes for which the community requires us?<sup>229</sup>

Moreover, he argued, direct involvement with the local working-class community through the clubs benefitted those working-class officers who participated in them as it effectively reduced their workload and improved the tone of the community in which they themselves lived:

The work is an education which enables them to bring wider understanding to their *official* work and its human relationships to the community in whose service they are. From every point of view, therefore, the evidence is conclusive that the direct association of the police with this form of social service gives added effectiveness to it, whether that effectiveness is measured by its advantages to the lads, to the police themselves, or to the general tone of the life of the district in

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<sup>226</sup> ‘Service Not Force’, *The Times*, 04 Apr 1936, p. 16.

<sup>227</sup> ‘High Ideals for Police’, *The Times*, 11 Apr 1938, p.8.

<sup>228</sup> ‘Norwich Lads’ Club’, *The Police Review*, 7 August 1936, p. 125.

<sup>229</sup> John Henry Dain, *Police Welfare Work among Boys*, Norwich: Norwich Lads’ Club, 1932, pp. 22-23.

which it operates. So far as the police are concerned, their job clearly is not to make business for themselves, but to assist and foster every tendency of right conduct.<sup>230</sup>

In his aim to ‘assist and foster every tendency of right conduct’ Dain revealed himself as a ‘moral entrepreneur’ who sought to morally regulate the activities of boys in Norwich in keeping with contemporary fear of the unregulated activities of working-class boys leading to criminal activity, as highlighted by Humphries and Tebbutt.<sup>231</sup>

The Hull *Daily Mail* of December 1946 included a photograph of PC Webster on traffic duty juxtaposed to one of him with a group of teenage boys: the caption read that he had ‘a very useful hobby’ because for ‘a whole evening every week’ he spent ‘his spare time lecturing and instructing youths of St. Paul’s-st. Hull City Police Boys’ Club on engineering.’ The newspaper added that the photograph of the boys showed them ‘listening intently during a session in the “workshop,”’ and claimed that ‘so eager’ were they ‘to further their mechanical knowledge that when the policeman “stands down,” the class divides into quiz teams, and intelligent questions and answers are exchanged.’<sup>232</sup> The boys’ eagerness to participate in the class suggests that they were keen to develop mechanical skills which would prepare them for the world of work, a theme that is discussed further in Chapter Five. In this extract, the many duties of the policeman are demonstrated: not only did Webster direct traffic, he lectured and instructed youths. His ability to teach engineering perhaps hinted at a former career. The use of the phrase to “stand down” suggesting that even off duty in ‘his spare time’ Webster was still essentially acting as a police officer, and the different aspects of his life: controller of traffic, engineering expert, teacher and youth worker were mingled together in a way that did not delineate between being on or off duty. Moreover, all these duties could be seen as sympathetic to the notion of service to the working-class community. In addition, this type of social service could have been an example of the ‘self-help networks’ that Todd talks about.

Finally, having looked at how the police-led boys’ club may have been placed within the working-class community; to fully understand its significance, it is useful to look at how it was received by those who attended the clubs. Information regarded this is scant but

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<sup>230</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>231</sup> Humphries, *Hooligans and Rebels*, pp. 1-27; Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 1

<sup>232</sup> ‘They Ask This P.C. Many Useful Questions’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 10 December 1946, p. 5.

there are a few extant letters that give some indication of what the legacy of the police-led boys' clubs within the community could have been. Ron Hepworth's letter regarding his memories of Tom Doody, in the Manchester club, as a 'friend' and 'elder brother, has already been discussed. A letter in the archives at Norwich penned in 1977, from old boy George S. Hamilton, written in response to a request from the club to raise annual subscriptions from past members, enthused 'what great boxers the Club turned out. It must never, never go under.'<sup>233</sup> From the same year the archive includes a letter from R.C. Catchpole which is worth quoting at length to get a proper sense of its tone:

Well I remember the day I became of (sic) member in 1923 at the age of 13 years, when Chief Constable Dain was alive.

I have just these last two weeks moved into Winchester Tower among the paper wrappings of my odds and ends, I opened the evening news which gave on Printing of the Public House on Chapel Street of Boxing Champions, and some of our old local lads.

Well I was surprised that the name of Police Constable Sergeant (sic) Baker and Police Constable Sergeant Jermy (sic) was not mentioned. These two Police started the Lads (sic) Club off, Sergeant Charlie Baker Boxing, Sergeant Jermy Gym.

My Cousin, Jumbo Jaris (sic), Snowy White, Harry Bygrove, Albert Howard now past away and many others with nick names, etc. I remember Ginger Sad (sic), as a new member in about 1929 or 1931, Charlie Baker (Sergeant) was sparring in the ring with me I myself only done a little boxing but sergeant Baker liked my foot work and how quick I was...I did not make it as a boxer but did learn Ginger Sad his foot work and how to use the rope work.

I did become a good Gym displayer and visited many towns and Garden Fete during my membership of the Lads' Club for many years they were good days when you had to box for the King of sportsmanship for the Love of sport and Gymnastics and Boxing...

I like many other old boys of The Norwich Lads' Club found myself able to take care of myself through the training of the Lads Club police sergeant Charlie Baker and sergent Jermy, when serving 6 ½ years in the 1939-1946 war...I served in the army as staff Sergeant of R.A.M.C. to the Royal Tank Corps.<sup>234</sup>

The various mistakes in spelling and grammar suggests that Catchpole was relatively uneducated and from a working-class background. He was very keen to emphasise the roles of Sergeant Baker and Police Constable Jarney in the club and felt the necessity to write about it as they were not mentioned in a recent newspaper article, which demonstrates how important they were to him when he was a club member. Moreover, although Dain was a significant local figure Catchpole identifies (albeit incorrectly) Jermy and Baker as the ones who started 'the Lads Club off' as the respective gym and boxing instructors. This suggests that for members the police officers they interacted with on a daily basis were far more significant in their lives than the high-ranking officers that may have been responsible for the actual foundation of the clubs. For Catchpole the

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<sup>233</sup> Old Boys' Union, 1977.

<sup>234</sup> NRO, Norwich Lads' Club Papers, file 819X7, Old Boys' Union, 1977.

club dominated his leisure activities ‘for many years’ presenting gym displays at numerous events and even training boxing skills to other members. He fondly remembered sparring with Baker in the ring and believed that the activities in the club prepared him for wartime service, as they taught him how ‘to take care of himself’. The latter point is particularly significant as Catchpole rose to the senior non-commissioned officer rank of Staff Sergeant. The impact of the police-led boys’ club for this old boy was preparedness for life as a civilian and as soldier, and the creation of fond memories.

Thus, the significance of the police-led boys’ club in the working-class community rested upon its place within the complex, contradictory and multi-dimension aspects of working-class daily life. Clubs were a venue for leisure activities as an alternative to or sometimes an extension of other traditional leisure activities found at church or in public houses, attendance could also be challenged by more modern pastimes such as film-going. Challenges to the status quo at police-led clubs could also come from the state in the form of dedicated childcare professionals who eventually replaced direct police involvement. The police themselves volunteered in the clubs as part of their understanding of their duties as a service to the community which was sometimes religiously motivated albeit in an indirect way. Finally, the clubs remained significant within the minds of some old boys who looked back upon their time as members with fondness.

## **Conclusion**

The role of the police-led boys’ club within the working-class community was a complex one. Their outlook was influenced by boys’ club publications and the concerns of the Chief Constables who founded them. Low-ranking police officers were attracted to volunteering in these clubs for a variety of reasons which included: the chance to improve their prospects of promotion; opportunities for self-improvement and the expression of their masculinity; or they may have been motivated through a sense of Christian or civic duty. Echoing the aims of the wider boys’ club movement: police clubs had a role in teaching self-control and good citizenship, and it was believed that the effects of this in the working-class community were far enough reaching to reduce incidents of juvenile crime and temper the spread of venereal disease. The clubs sat within the local community alongside other social institutions such as the church or public house. Working-class police officers ran them on a daily basis as part of an overarching concept of service to the community. Club attendance was sometimes challenged but those who



did attend had fond memories of their involvement. Having investigated the role of the police-led club in the working-class community, it is interesting to uncover what sort of relationship middle-class people, within the local community, had with the clubs to ascertain whether there were any comparisons or conflicts between the two standpoints.

## **Chapter Four: Police-led boys' clubs and middle-class interventionism**

### **Introduction**

Following on from police-led clubs in the working-class community, investigation into whether police-led boys' clubs were an example of middle-class interventionism will shed light on the extent to which the boys' clubs were a bottom-up intervention led by working-class police officers or a top-down initiative led by high-ranking middle-class police officers. It will again examine how far the police clubs conformed to the boys' club movement as a whole. In order to ascertain to what extent police-led boys' clubs were an example of middle-class interventionism, it is important to establish what is meant by 'middle-class' and 'interventionism' before turning to the following questions. Firstly, how middle-class were the high-ranking officers that founded the clubs? Secondly, how were police-led boys' clubs managed and funded? Thirdly, what was the role of doctors and dentists in the clubs? Finally, how were police-led clubs endorsed by royals and members of the peerage?

### **Middle-class interventionism**

In order to establish what is meant by the phrase 'middle-class interventionism', it is necessary to first outline what is meant by the term 'middle-class'. A straightforward definition of 'middle-class', found in a modern dictionary is: 'the social group between the upper and working classes; professional and business people.'<sup>235</sup> This definition provides a starting point, but needs to be expanded much further. For the purposes of this area of research it was necessary to define the various elements that needed to be in place to define a person as middle-class. These elements include background, education, profession, and moral standards.

Ross McKibbin's work on classes and cultures between 1918 and 1951 gives a nuanced definition of the middle class. He challenges the traditional notion that the working class ended and the middle class began at £250 per year and argues that education, occupation, salary, dress, social aspiration, manners and fertility were all factors that defined the middle class. Moreover, it was important to define them as 'middle classes' rather than just the middle class; for example there was a large difference in life-style between the

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<sup>235</sup> Judy Pearsall (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary: Tenth Edition, Revised*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001, p. 901.

upper middle class who might have social and cultural expectations very similar to those of the upper classes and the lower middle class who may have lived in small villas or been employed as clerks. Further divisions existed between the 'traditional' middle class who were likely to live in the same geographical area for the whole of their lives and the 'non-traditional' middle class who were mobile, perhaps moving to pursue better employment prospects, although across the spectrum of the middle classes their may have been joint hostility towards an organised working class. The middle classes were also subject to change through the period. In 1918 the higher professions were dominated by the traditional occupations of the church, law and medicine, but by 1951 this had changed to commercial, scientific and technical occupations.<sup>236</sup>

More recently, historian Mike Savage has demarcated the middle-class identity of the mid-twentieth century as changing from one defined by difference from the working-class people, to one defined 'more in the terms of their "managerial" and "technical role"'. Savage adds that the concept of the 'inherent cultural superiority' of middle-class people who led cultured and civilised lifestyles in contrast to working classes who led lives full of 'hardship, graft and endurance' came to be seen as 'snobbish', and at the same time 'manual workers' gained more freedom and choice within their lives.<sup>237</sup> Thus, middle-class identities in comparison to the working-class cultures explored in the preceding chapter were complex and fluid, encompassing varying levels of income, different professions and cultural identities.

With regards to 'interventionism' this concept is explored with reference to middle-class worries about juvenile delinquency and the child-saving movement, and by outlining the concept of the 'moral entrepreneur', in order to evaluate whether their actions could be defined as interventions rather than examples of guidance or even participation. John Gillis was one of the first historians to explore middle-class attitudes to juvenile delinquency. In the 1970s he argued fears about working-class youths had a long precedence; he maintained that since 1700 the 'middle strata of European society' had 'imposed upon the young a conformity and dependence that proved unacceptable to a

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<sup>236</sup> Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England, 1918-51*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 44-47, 71, 100-104.

<sup>237</sup> Mike Savage, 'Affluence and Social Change in the Making of Technocratic Middle-Class Identities: Britain, 1939-55', *Contemporary British History* 22.4 (2008), p. 458.

significant segment of the population', they did not interpret 'the independence and nonconformity of the poor as a product of economic conditions', rather 'they tended to inflate their own fears by treating a legitimate tradition of youth' when young people were 'freed from all the cares and responsibilities of a troubled civilisation' as 'punishable delinquency.'<sup>238</sup> This point of view is echoed by John Springhall's work which has illustrated from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century that working-class young people have been the subject of moral panics, with panics about, for example, gangster films in the 1930s and horror comics in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>239</sup>

One response of the middle classes to such fears and panics was the child-saving movement.' For historian Linda Mahood the 'child-saving movement was part of a larger programme, if an apparently piecemeal one, to remake delinquent youth into ideal citizens.'<sup>240</sup> This movement was 'informed by particular discourses and ideologies of the prison, the school, the family, the market and the street,' within this context 'a new body of experts' monitored and attempted to control the behaviour of children. The experts or 'child-savers' held 'particular views about the causes and treatment of delinquency; and gender, class and sexuality were implicated in, and produced by theories and practices.'<sup>241</sup> She adds that: 'Middle-class child-savers united against working-class parents in an effort to protect working-class children, especially girls, from the dangerous streets and in some cases their own homes.'<sup>242</sup> Child-saving was a prime example of middle-class interventionism in that 'middle-class child-savers united against working-class' parents to prevent juvenile delinquency by physically removing children from unsuitable environments. Such interventionism had highly moralistic overtones and middle-class individuals who sought to encourage others to intervene in the lives of working-class people in their communities could have been 'moral entrepreneurs', or 'moral heroes', terms that is discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter.

Accordingly, for the purposes of this study the term 'middle-class' will encompass individuals who were from a broad range of backgrounds and educational experiences.

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<sup>238</sup> Gillis, *Youth and History*, pp. 178-82.

<sup>239</sup> John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta Rap, 1830-1996*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, pp. 98-146.

<sup>240</sup> Linda Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family: Britain, 1850-1940*, London: UCL Press Limited, 1995, p. 63.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, pp. 151-152.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

The definition of middle-class here does not focus on background and education, rather, other factors, such as profession (including both traditional occupations and managerial or technical roles), and moral expectations. In turn, the phrase ‘middle-class interventionism’ will encompass moral concerns about juvenile delinquency alongside the desire to remove youths from undesirable environments.

### **How middle-class were the high-ranking officers who founded the clubs?**

In order to investigate how middle-class were the high-ranking officers who established the clubs, first it is necessary to focus on the history of Chief Constables and their professionalisation in the first half of the twentieth century, their relationship with the men that worked under them and their position as ‘moral heroes’. Secondly, it is useful to investigate what Charles Russell and Basil Henriques had to say about Chief Constable involvement in the boys’ clubs; before, thirdly, examining the career trajectories of individual Chief Constables and senior officers, their level of recognition nationally, and how they were portrayed in the press at the police-led clubs in Norwich, Manchester, Hyde and Hull.

David S. Wall was one of the first historians to write about Chief Constables. His work in the 1990s explained that borough Chief Constables, who presided in urban areas, would have mainly come from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds unlike their county counterparts who mainly hailed from the landed classes and from military backgrounds. According to Wall the career trajectories of Chief Constables were affected to some extent during the first half of the twentieth century by increased professionalisation. ‘Before the First World War’, he argued ‘typical borough Chief Constables would have joined the force whilst in their early twenties and would have risen to Inspector within about ten years, before being appointed to command a small force whilst in their early thirties. After a few years’ experience in a small force it was common for them to move to larger forces. Most served for about 15 to 20 years before retiring whilst in their fifties.’<sup>243</sup> He added that during the 1920s ‘a new professional ethos crept into policing as a result of the Desborough recommendations on higher pay, better conditions, and centralized training’ which favoured the internal recruitment of

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<sup>243</sup> David S. Wall, ‘The Ideology of Internal Recruitment: The Selection of Chief Constables and Changes within the Tripartite Arrangement’, *British Journal of Criminology* 34.3 (1994) p. 327.

chief officers. However, in 1934 the opening of the Metropolitan Police College in Hendon proved both unpopular and controversial as it allowed middle-class graduates to enter the police at Inspector level and rise quickly through the ranks, without having experienced working in the lower ranks first. At the outbreak of the Second World War, although the Hendon generation was already in place, Chief Constables could only be appointed if they had served within the ranks, or had gained policing experience while serving in the army: revealing a continued commitment to internal recruitment in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1949 a National Police College was created 'to train serving officers from the intermediate ranks in police management skills.'<sup>244</sup> Thus, according to Wall, chief officers from the interwar to early post-war period were increasingly professional, yet still had working-class or, in the case of those who had entered in the late nineteenth century and been promoted as clerks, lower-middle-class origins.

Also in the 1990s, Weinberger's research on English policing from the 1930s to the 1960s revealed that low social class was not necessarily any impediment to promotion; although the system of promotion could be somewhat confused and unpredictable. Boards of promotion were not the norm during this period, therefore Chief Constables often granted promotions after consulting informally with their chief officers, and sometimes without consulting anybody. She adds that exams were not a definite route to promotion either, as academia was often viewed with suspicion as typified by the unpopularity of Trenchard's Hendon graduates. Moreover, sharing the same religion or interests were often beneficial to prospects of promotion, as it was the Chief Constable who was the omnipotent figure whose passions 'set the tone' for the force and dominated policy decisions.<sup>245</sup> In keeping with this, Klein has demonstrated that in Liverpool up to 90 percent of police officers were rumoured to have joined the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, in 1918, due to favouritism and corruption in the force; typified by their Chief Constable, Francis Caldwell, who based promotion on 'connections rather than street experience.'<sup>246</sup> The ability for police officers to rise through the ranks and become Chief Constables during the first half of the twentieth century was limited as such upward

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<sup>244</sup> Wall, 'The Ideology of Internal Recruitment', pp. 330-332

<sup>245</sup> Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World*, pp. 53-56.

<sup>246</sup> Klein, *Invisible Men*, pp. 150-51.

mobility was to some extent the exception that proved the rule for ambitious working-class officers. The majority of officers stayed within the ranks, though promotion was possible, and were subject to inconsistent promotional practices. Paradoxically, Chief Constables who rose through the ranks could also be instrumental in preventing others doing so.

In addition, Klein has written, in a book focusing on the history of the Chief Constable, about the relationship between Chief Constables and the men working under them. She argues that by the beginning of the twentieth century, ‘a more educated work force meant that police forces were now able to appoint leaders from their own ranks, replacing the more traditional system of recruiting largely from the military.’<sup>247</sup> Indeed, she adds that ‘by the 1940s, hiring Chief Constables who had risen through the ranks of the British police forces became the new standard.’<sup>248</sup> As will soon be demonstrated the Chief Constables who founded boys’ clubs, surveyed in this section, also rose through the ranks. By comparing several Chief Constables’ relationships with their men, Klein shows how the ‘Chief Constable shaped the character of his force, for better or worse’ and that the ‘treatment of his men set the standard for how superior officers treated constables.’<sup>249</sup> She adds that the best Chief Constables were those who provided their men with ‘training, education, and opportunities for advancement’; ‘rewarded achievements, advised the uncertain and disciplined fairly.’<sup>250</sup> One Chief Constable she cites as being particularly successful was Robert Peacock, Chief Constable of Manchester City Police 1898-1926 (whose speech on juvenile crime was cited in the previous chapter). She argues that ‘he was accessible, respected, strict but fair, and supported his men. His strong ethics were grounded in his working-class background, giving him a shared cultural context with his men. Moreover John Maxwell, Peacock’s successor, ‘continued the Peacock tradition.’<sup>251</sup> Maxwell was in office during the life of Manchester City Police Lads’ Club and the environment in the force that Peacock created, continued by Maxwell, could well have

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<sup>247</sup> Kim Stevenson, David J. Cox, and Ian Channing, (eds), *Leading the Police: A History of Chief Constables 1835-2017*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, p. 8.

<sup>248</sup> Joanne Klein, ‘“The best police officer in the force”: Chief Constables and their men, 1900-39’, in Kim Stevenson, David J. Cox and Ian Channing (eds), *Leading the Police: A History of Chief Constables 1835-2017*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, p. 125.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 139-40.

enabled the club to thrive. Finally, with respects to promotion, Peacock worked to stop promotions based on religious prejudice. His stance contrasted favourably with that of Chief Constables in Liverpool and Birmingham. In Liverpool the Chief Constable ignored favouritism and therefore it remained a deep-rooted problem. At Birmingham one Police Inspector commented that promotion came by ‘having the same religion as the Chief Constable; marrying into a police family, preferably a superintendent’s daughter, and if all else failed, working hard and coming to the superintendent’s notice.’<sup>252</sup>

In the same publication Kim Stevenson writes about the role of Chief Constables, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as moral guardians and explores a historical precursor to the more modern concept of ‘Zero Tolerance Policing’ and the idea that a police leader was expected to ‘inculcate moral fortitude in his men’ and be able to ‘convince the police authorities’ of his own ‘moral character’.<sup>253</sup> She defines Chief Constables that she describes as ‘moral heroes’ as:

Often self-declaredly presenting themselves as standard bearers and guardians of public morality, such individuals were exemplary models of irrepressible moral leadership, deploying operational strategies to control social behaviour that local elites regarded as essentially immoral: primarily drunkenness, prostitution, betting and gambling.<sup>254</sup>

This type of Chief Constable, she ponders, may have been implementing the ‘wishes of their masters’ or were motivated by ‘their own personal moral integrity and beliefs’; whatever their motivations they were ‘highly influential individuals, having a direct impact upon the wider popular consciousness and consensus.’<sup>255</sup> The term ‘moral hero’ is similar to the term ‘moral entrepreneur’ used by David Philips with regards to the nineteenth century; he defines it as ‘someone who makes a career out of rousing public alarm on some particular issue (especially crime), advocating certain necessary reforms and measures...to deal with the problem, and putting forward himself as the appropriate person to carry out these reforms and measures effectively.’<sup>256</sup> It is interesting to

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid, p. 132.

<sup>253</sup> Stevenson et al, *Leading the Police*, p. 8.

<sup>254</sup> Kim Stevenson, ‘Chief Constables as “moral heroes” and guardians of public morality’, in Kim Stevenson, David J. Cox and Ian Channing (eds), *Leading the Police: A History of Chief Constables 1835-2017*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, p. 91.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>256</sup> David Philips, ‘Three “Moral Entrepreneurs” and the creation of the “criminal class” in England, c. 1790s-1840s’, *Crime, History & Societies* 7.1 (2003), pp. 2-24.



contemplate whether those Chief Constables involved in boys' clubs fit into either definition of a 'moral hero' or 'moral entrepreneur'.

Having established the background and characteristics of Chief Constables, it is useful to examine how they were viewed by contemporary figures in the wider boys' club movement. Both Charles Russell and Basil Henriques wrote about the relationship between Chief Constables and boys' clubs and there is evidence that they viewed Chief Constables as 'highly influential individuals' in their local communities, who were guardians of public morality. Russell in his 1932 book on boys' clubs noted that 'an interesting fact in connection to boys' clubs' was 'the growing development of interest on the part of the Police Authorities,' adding that 'a letter' regarding the topic of boys' clubs 'addressed to the Chief Constables of some two hundred of the most important towns and boroughs brought in response not one single unfavourable reply or adverse criticism.' Russell went on to emphasise that 'still more convincing of Police appreciation' was 'the participation of the Police in boys' club work and even the foundation of clubs by Chief Constables themselves.'<sup>257</sup> A few years later in an article for the *Metropolitan Police College Journal*, Henriques suggested that police-led clubs 'could greatly help in the inculcation of good manners and good temper which characterizes the English police to-day,' adding that the establishment of boys' clubs would benefit from the co-operation of local voluntary organisations, like the Rotatory Club, Christian groups and the local police.<sup>258</sup> Russell obviously felt that Chief Constables across the board were staunch supporters of the boys' club movement and believed in its ability to combat juvenile delinquency, some even becoming directly involved. On the other hand, Henriques added the proviso that if the police were willing to work with the solidly Christian and middle-class organisations their intrinsic respectability could be harnessed.

As established in Chapter Two, Chief Constables were principal figures in the police-led boys' club. Boys' clubs were founded by Chief Constables in at least 15 separate locations in England and Wales during the interwar period.<sup>259</sup> Manchester City Police

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<sup>257</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>258</sup> Basil L. Q. Henriques, 'Boys Clubs in Relation to Delinquency', *Metropolitan Police College Journal* 3 (1937), p. 207.

<sup>259</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 251-257; Robert Walker, *Seventy Years Young: A History of the Norwich Lads Club 1918-1988*, Norwich: Alpha Press, 1990, p. 3; 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club', *The*

Lads' Club, founded in 1937 by Superintendent Alexander Aberdein, was heavily endorsed by their Chief Constable John Maxwell.<sup>260</sup> In the following section the careers of the club founders at Norwich, Manchester, Hyde and Hull is reviewed, all of whom rose through the ranks from Police Constable to Chief Constable.

Dain's and Aberdein's career paths have been given above on page 18. As shown in Chapter Two, Dain was particularly vocal in addressing the problem of juvenile delinquency through boys' clubs and became something of an expert in the field to the extent that he published his theories. Aberdein used his work at his club as a means of gaining promotion (albeit unsuccessfully in this instance); citing it in his application to the appointment of Second Assistant Chief Constable at Manchester in 1941, he wrote:

The Lads' Club at Mill Street Station, where the youth of the district have to some extent been catered for in the way of useful training and recreation, has become sufficiently well known as now to be regarded as an institution. This has been brought about by the enthusiasm of my men and myself to do something to prevent the spread of delinquency amongst youth, which is a matter of grave concern at the present time.<sup>261</sup>

In this quote Aberdein revealed that he believed the club to have been a successful enough venture 'to be regarded an institution', but more importantly it showed that he felt a 'grave' moral concern about 'the spread of juvenile delinquency'. Indicating his position as a local 'moral hero.' Moreover, local press coverage at the time suggests that by the time he was Superintendent at Manchester his image was one of a well-educated middle-class man, even though his origins were working-class. An excerpt from the *Daily Express* in February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938, for example, described Aberdein as 'studious-looking' and 'Scottish accented.'<sup>262</sup>

Similarly, a description of the opening night of Chief Constable Danby's boys' club at Hyde on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 1928 depicted an image of middle-class philanthropy, it reads:

Mr. Danby received them in the club room, which contains a piano, books, tables for draughts and dominoes, and a bagatelle table. It was evident that the room was too small, but the boys were taken to the basement of the Town Hall for physical drill in relays, while the remainder sang

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*Times*, 6 October 1928, p. 9; 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979', p. 2; John Barber, 'Straight and True, p. 1; 'Police Fit Out Three Boys' Clubs', *The Observer*, 5 December 1943, p. 5.

<sup>260</sup> Doody, *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes*.

<sup>261</sup> GMPMA, 'A' Box, Alexander Aberdein Manchester City Police Force Appointment of Second Assistant Chief Constable Application with a Copy of Testimonials, 1941, p. 2.

<sup>262</sup> Aberdein, Application with a Copy of Testimonials, p. 2; Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, p. 4.

popular ditties, the Chief Constable's son acting as pianist. Scout leaders in the town busied themselves in making the boys comfortable, in organizing games, and later providing refreshments.<sup>263</sup>

Two elements in this scene which struck a middle-class note were firstly the Chief Constable's son acting as a pianist and secondly the contribution of the town's Scout leaders. With regards to the latter, however, it is important to note that working with the Scout leaders may have simply been an opportunity to integrate with pre-existing clubs in the town and learn from their expertise, as many police officers would have been involved with youth work for the first time. J.W.A. Danby, who was the son of a police officer in the Lincolnshire constabulary, was born in that county in 1868. As a young man Danby joined the Rotherham Police Force as a Police Constable. Hyde Borough Police Force was formed in 1898, and Danby, at just 30 years of age, was appointed their first Chief Constable, where he remained until his death in 1931. Interestingly, he married the daughter of the former Chief Constable of Burnley, which, in light of Klein's comments above on promotion, suggests may have led to his early promotion. In addition, two of his brothers became Chief Constables, one in Peterborough, and the other in Canada.<sup>264</sup>

T. Wells, the founder of Hull City Police Boys' Club (which ran at three separate premises) came from a naval background. He was educated at the Royal Naval School Chatham before joining Brighton Police force in 1911. During the First World War he was in the Royal Navy, re-joining Brighton once the war was over. By 1929 he had risen through the ranks to become acting Superintendent in charge of the CID, and by 1932 he was promoted to the position of Chief Constable of Chesterfield, moving to become Chief Constable of Hull in 1941. He liked technology, using photography to promote road safety, and during his time at Chesterfield was a pioneer in the use of the cine-camera to record street betting and thus present it as evidence in court.<sup>265</sup> In 1947 the three boys' clubs with a combined membership of 650 were well-known enough nationally to be visited by representatives from other police forces interested in establishing their own

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<sup>263</sup> 'Chief Constable's Boys' Club', *The Times*, 6 October 1928, p. 9.

<sup>264</sup> 'Mr J.W.A. Danby', *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 December 1931, p. 12.

<sup>265</sup> Chris Williams, 'Police filming English streets in 1935: the limits of mediated identification', *Surveillance and Society* 6.1 (2009), pp. 3-9.

clubs (which hints that the club movement may have gone on longer than the evidence so far discovered suggests).<sup>266</sup>

As demonstrated above, all four officers rose through the ranks from the position of Police Constable to Chief Constable. The time it took to effect this change was anything between approximately 12 (in the case of Danby) and 27 years (in the case of Aberdein). Nevertheless, all of them would have been respected by their men as having learnt their trade on the beat and were likely to have been successful Chief Constables within the criteria outlined by Klein. Though the men originated from working-class backgrounds it is likely their promotions led to an automatic rise in social class as they experienced a vast increase in salary, and enjoyed a change in social standing interacting with local dignitaries such as aldermen, mayors, councillors, doctors and other professionals. They would have earned enough money to have been able to keep servants and educate their children privately, and as suggested above in the case of Danby, pay for their children to have private music lessons. Their image locally, as depicted by the local press, was that of bulwarks of middle-class society. Nationally, leaders of the boys' club movement recognised the importance of Chief Constables in the promotion of their cause. Those Chief Constables directly involved in boys' clubs may have even become 'moral heroes' or 'moral entrepreneurs' as they sought to combat the problem of juvenile delinquency directly, through publications, addresses and providing inspiration for visiting police forces, further securing their position as middle-class cultural commentators.

### **How did management and funding compare across the clubs?**

In order to explore how police-led clubs were managed and funded it is useful first to establish the social context of the time with regards to general middle-class involvement in the clubs, before examining NABC guidance on management and funding in order to ascertain whether police-led clubs conformed to such guidance. The management at three police-led clubs is briefly reviewed, before taking a more detailed look at funding of the clubs at Lancaster, Norwich, Swansea, Manchester and Hull. The management and funding of Salford Lads' Club will also be included as a comparison.

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<sup>266</sup> '1 Force's Efficiency', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 1 October 1947, p.3.

In the late 1970s historian Michael Blanch saw boys' clubs at the beginning of the twentieth century as an expression of British imperialism and nationalism. He stated that: 'Nearly all the clubs and movements vied for the custom of working-class children, so they amounted to roughly 80 per cent of the child population.' He argued that 'working-class culture' was perceived by club organisers to be the main challenge. Working-class culture, as defined by Blanch, included that of 'the child demarcated by indiscipline,' in the form of street gangs or simply a 'brief moment of release' from repressive school discipline; and that of the adult, or 'parent' which encompassed gambling, drinking and 'moral laxity'. Blanch further argued that the middle classes used police officers to regulate 'uncontrolled' leisure activities such as 'playing football in the streets, loitering and public bathing,' and provided alternative controlled leisure activities through boys' clubs.<sup>267</sup>

More recently historians have challenged the notion of such class conflict. In her exploration of the interwar boys' club movement Melanie Tebbutt asserts that 'club workers were, by the interwar years, increasingly ...from respectable working-class backgrounds, and had often been members themselves.'<sup>268</sup> Although she does also reveal that one contemporary commentator on the left accused the interwar boys' club movement as being mainly controlled by middle-class, middle-aged adults 'whose thinking had been formed in the pre-war period when public school ideals of manliness had resonated across the organised youth movement...'<sup>269</sup> Nick Hayes and Barry M. Doyle argue that middle-class identity in the interwar period was not 'anti-local' or 'anti-working-class.'<sup>270</sup> In addition, Doyle has brought middle-class society in interwar Norwich into sharp focus. His research into the structure of 'elite power' in that city concludes that 'at least until the slump, sections of the Norwich middle class, and social leaders in particular, maintained interest in the urban environment and their faith in the municipal arena as the most effective means of creating and maintaining a modern,

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<sup>267</sup> Michael Blanch, 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Organised Youth', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher, and R. Johnson (eds), *Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, London: Hutchinson, 1979, pp. 103-105.

<sup>268</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 79.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

<sup>270</sup> Nick Hayes and Barry M. Doyle, 'Eggs, rags and whist drives: popular munificence and the development of provincial medical voluntarism between the wars', *Historical Research* 86.234 (2013), p. 712-713.

efficient city.’ He argues that the middle classes (particularly those from the dissenting tradition) were able to do this by harnessing networks ‘centred on kinship but encompassing chapel, the freemasons, business organizations and charities.’<sup>271</sup> Again a nuanced picture of class culture is presented. Historians have moved away from the concept of class conflict to uncovering a far more complex state of affairs. Club organisers were not necessarily middle-class people wishing to improve working-class children, the organisers themselves could be working-class or part of a network of middle-class people concerned with achieving civic reforms.

As established in Chapter Two, regular contributors to NABC publications and contemporary commentators on the boys’ club movement hailed from the middle classes. One contributor to an edition of *The Boy* in August 1927 gave an overview of Salford Lads’ Club, which was not a police-led club, but is used here for the purposes of comparison. The writer of the article conceded that ‘buildings and furniture and methods of management are important,’ but stressed that it was ‘men and motives’ that mattered the most. The club was managed by a ‘Committee of ten’ five of which were ‘appointed by the Trustees’ the other five being ‘elected annually by the subscribers’. At the time the committee included members who were Justices of the Peace.<sup>272</sup> Club annual membership was around 1000. Club ‘detail work’ was often exacted by former members ‘in their early thirties’ who not only oversaw the ‘Games Rooms and Library’ but were entrusted with ‘tasks of much greater responsibility such as receiving of members’ weekly subscriptions and Camp contributions, and the keeping of Club registers.’ The clubs’ funding came from members’ subscriptions and donations from the public in fairly equal measure.<sup>273</sup> Membership subscriptions were important to many clubs: in fact Llewellyn Smith in his 1935 survey of London life and labour commented that few clubs ‘could be run without a substantial subscription list. Members contribute a weekly subscription, usually 2d. ...and as a rule pay either the whole or part of the cost of their gymnasium kit – vests, knickers and shoes – which amounts to about 3s. 6d.’<sup>274</sup> A brief glance at Salford

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<sup>271</sup> Barry M. Doyle, ‘The structure of elite power in the early twentieth-century city: Norwich, 1900-35’, *Urban History* 24.2 (2009), pp. 198-199.

<sup>272</sup> Norman T. Norman and Charles E. Clift, *Salford Lads’ Club Season 1927-28*, Salford: Salford Lads’ Club, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>273</sup> Charles E. Clift, ‘The Salford Lads’ Club’, *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 3.1 (1938), pp. 7-9.

<sup>274</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour*, p. 159.

Lads' Club annual reports shows many donations from individual members of the public, J.P.s, trades, memorial subscriptions and donations from the philanthropist Groves family who founded the club. The full management committee, including the vice-presidents, consisted at any one time of between six and thirteen J.P.s with Lord Egerton of Tatton as President.<sup>275</sup> The example of Salford Lads' Club, a club well-known to the readers of NABC publications, is an interesting benchmark from which to compare police-led clubs.

At Salford Lads' Club middle-class individuals were well entrenched in the management and funding of the club. It is fascinating to explore if this was the case with the police-led clubs and whether the clubs reflected the nuanced picture of middle-class culture established by the historiography. Dain maintained that the management of his club was 'representative of all ranks in the Police Force, with Lord Mayor as President, the Chief Constable as Chairman, the Superintendent as Hon. Secretary, and the Chief Clerk as Hon. Asst. Secretary.' Moreover, he was keen to emphasise that the daily activities were managed by low-ranking police officers who volunteered in their off-duty hours and by older members of the club.<sup>276</sup> However, the management of the club essentially stayed the same throughout the period 1918-1951. For example, the reopening of Norwich Lads' Club in a new building in 1951, written by Lord Mackintosh of Halifax, the club's committee of management, honorary officials and trustees was listed as including the Lord Mayor, Sheriff and Chief Constable of Norwich (by then A.F. Plume) and a variety of aldermen.<sup>277</sup> Consequently, middle-class people were most involved in the management committee and were less likely to interact with club members on a daily basis unlike the working-class police officers. This was similarly the case at Manchester City Police Lads' Club where the Management Committee composed of high-ranking serving members of the Force, 'with the Divisional Superintendent as Chairman,' whilst 'in the main, Club Officers and Instructors' were 'volunteers from serving members of the Force.'<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Norman T. Norman and Charles E. Clift, *Salford Lads' Fifteenth Annual Report 1917-18*, Salford: Salford Lads' Club, 1918, pp. 2, 5-6; Norman and Clift, *Salford Lads' Club Season 1927-28*, pp. 1, 8-9; Norman T. Norman and Charles E. Clift, *Salford Lads' Club Thirty-Fourth Annual Report 1937*, Salford: Salford Lads' Club, 1937, pp. 3, 15-16.

<sup>276</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>277</sup> *Re-opening of the Norwich Lads' Club – A Souvenir*, Norwich: Norwich Lads' Club, 1951.

<sup>278</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, p. 15.

At Lancaster Boys' Club the management demonstrated strong links between the private sector middle-class, such as the Rotary Club, and the public sector middle-class, for example local health officials. The forming of a club was first suggested in a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 1927 between Allen Stewart, a solicitor and Rotary Club member and the president of the local Rotary, Dr Buchanan, who was also Medical officer of Health for the area.<sup>279</sup> Although the involvement of the police is not mentioned in the initial letter, a committee consisting of police as well as Rotary Club members visited Norwich Lads' Club for inspiration soon after it was written. Their first management committee assembled to supervise the foundation of the club included the Chief Constable C.E. Harris as Chairman and Inspector James Thornton as Secretary, and it was members of the Rotary Club and police officers who undertook the day-to-day supervision activities and care of the club premises (in a small wooden former First World War remount depot). When Thornton retired as secretary (in the early 30s) he was replaced Mr. H.H. Kellet, the Chief Clerk in the local Health Department.<sup>280</sup> Therefore, the middle classes were most in evidence within club management committees. Police officers who sat on club committees were derived from the higher ranks and thus middle-class in terms of profession and outlook, albeit they may have originally hailed from working-class backgrounds.

The funding of the police-led clubs, however, presents a more complex picture. Throughout the interwar and early post-war period Lancaster Lads' Club was funded by local middle-class figures such as Alderman Mrs. Hermione L. Musgrove-Hoyle who paid for a playing field in 1951, which was laid on a piece of land bought in 1930 via an interest free loan from Dr. Buchanan.<sup>281</sup> Also, the Lancaster Education Committee provided funding for Lancaster Boys' Club for woodwork classes in 1935, as the members were unlikely to be able to attend evening institutes where such education classes were usually given.<sup>282</sup>

In his 1932 pamphlet, Dain lists some of the major contributors to club funds at Norwich. These included the Carnegie Trust who 'granted £200 worth of new books' for the club

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<sup>279</sup> 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979', pp. 1-2.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>282</sup> 'Education Classes at Boys' Clubs', *The Lancashire Daily Post*, 14 December 1935, p. 3; 'Universities Want Bigger Grants', *The Lancashire Daily Post*, 16 December 1935, p. 8.



library and ‘boot and shoe employers’ who had donated ‘nearly £2,000 during the lifetime of the Club’ which was approximately 14 years at that point.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, he was eager to stress that funding for the club came from diverse avenues ‘not merely from a few well-to-do people, but in small subscriptions from large numbers of people of limited means.’ This included donations ‘from visitors’, ‘the proceeds of dances of the force and entertainments specially set aside for this purpose by the amusement houses of the City’, and from ‘the gate money at the annual football match between the Police and Special Constables.’<sup>284</sup> Although, in the latter case, special constables indicted further middle-class involvement as they were usually ‘respectable middle-class, often middle-aged men.’<sup>285</sup> In 1936, an extension to Norwich Lads’ Club, shared with ‘the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the British Red Cross Society,’ and costing at least £7,000 was partly funded by public subscription from ‘the city and county.’<sup>286</sup>

At Swansea, according to John Barber, who was Leader in Charge of Swansea Boys and Girls Club for 14 years in the 1930s, ‘the list of financial subscribers printed in the first Club Annual Handbook’ read like a ‘Who’s Who of Swansea at the time.’ It included donations of money and equipment from ‘organisations such as Rotary Clubs, Masonic Lodges, Chambers of Trade, the Legal Profession together with many prominent townspeople of the day.’<sup>287</sup> In 1955, Swansea’s debts were wiped out (it had been overspending by £200 per year) by a £1000 cheque that came from the proceeds of a ‘midnight matinee’ organised to raise funds for the boys’ club by the Variety Club of Great Britain.<sup>288</sup> The previous year it was reported that the annual running costs of the club were £1,600. Voluntary subscribers provided 28 percent of the income, members’ subscriptions nine percent and the local education authority 29 percent, the rest coming from special fund raising events, but also leaving a deficit.<sup>289</sup> Swansea was unusual amongst the police-led clubs in that it received almost a third of its funding from the state, through the local education authority.

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<sup>283</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 11.

<sup>284</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare*, p. 12.

<sup>285</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p. 189.

<sup>286</sup> ‘Extension to Norwich Lads’ Club’, *The Police Review*, 20 November 1936, p. 481.

<sup>287</sup> Barber, ‘Straight and True’, p. 2.

<sup>288</sup> ‘Presentation of a cheque’, *Evening Post* (Swansea), 14 October 1955, page unknown.

<sup>289</sup> ‘Swansea Boys’ Club is of Age’, *Evening Post* (Swansea), 21 June 1954, page unknown.

As the best-preserved police-led boys' club archive, Manchester City Police Lads' Club provided the most detailed view of club funding. The club was, to an extent maintained and funded by the police themselves. The *Police Review* reported on April 5<sup>th</sup> 1940 that the 'Watch Committee installed central heating and decorated the Club,' which was given free use of the premises in Mill Street Police Station.<sup>290</sup> According to the club's annual reports in 1938-39 the largest category of donor were commercial enterprises (such as dairies, retailers and manufacturers) with 19 donations, closely followed by individuals with 18, next were eleven police officers who provided funds, then five councillors, two military personnel, an anonymous donation, a donation from a J.P., from the Manchester Guardian and two substantial donations from the Manchester City Police & Fire Brigade Charity and Swimming Club. The top five donations in ascending order were Messrs. North Fur Co. with £3; Messrs Dobson Dairies Ltd. with £4 4s.; Councillor D. Gosling (who was Chief ARP Warden for the city of Manchester), Messrs. Refuge Assurance Company (housed in one Manchester's most striking buildings) and Manchester City Police & Fire Brigade Charity Fund with £5 5s. each (donation in guineas was a very upper class thing to do); J. Harker, Esq with £14 10s.; and, with the largest donation of £16 2s. 11d. Manchester City Police & Fire Brigade Swimming Club.<sup>291</sup> The number of donations decline the following year from 49 to 21. The annual report for 1940-41 shows nine donations from individuals, five from commercial enterprises, two from military personnel, two from councillors and one donation each from anonymous, an alderman and a police officer. The top five donations/subscriptions in this case come from Sir John Maxwell, C.B.E. (the Chief Constable) and J. Kenworthy & Sons (Grocers) Ltd. both with £2 2 s.; D. Silverton Esq. with £3; Refuge Assurance Co. Ltd. and Councillor D. Gosling, O.B.E., J.P. with £5 5s. each; £10 from anonymous; and £23 10s. from G.R.A. & White City Associated Ltd.<sup>292</sup> The final year of the club, 1942, saw 22 donations and subscriptions, nine coming from individuals, five from military personnel (a rear-admiral, two sub-commanders, a major and a captain), three from councillors, two anonymous donations and two from commercial enterprises. The pattern of funding was very different in that year with the most valuable subscriptions coming from Councillor

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<sup>290</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, p. 15.

<sup>291</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, pp. 19-20; 'Defence Against the High Explosive Bomb', *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 January 1939, p. 13.

<sup>292</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, 1941, p. 11.

Gosling, who worked closely with the city police in his position as Chief ARP Warden, and the Refuge Assurance Company Ltd., both giving £5 5s., the rest was made up of donations or subscriptions of £2 2s. or less.<sup>293</sup>

At Hyde the largest category of subscriber by far were individuals who provided 100 separate subscriptions, then commercial enterprises with 13, followed by institutions such as dramatic societies with six. Out of the individual subscribers seven were doctors, six were J.P.s, five accountants, three military, three councillors, two aldermen, a lord, an M.P. and someone with a B.A., indicating a very middle-class tone to the subscribers. The top five subscribers at Hyde Lads' Club from 1956-57 were Joseph Adamson and Co. Ltd. with £25; the Mayor of Hyde's Fund with £45 10s.; Reg. Andrew, Esq. with £50; Aston Bros. Ltd. and the Ladies Committee with £100 each; and Cheshire County Council with £350.<sup>294</sup> The final entry implying that the council had decided to fund it. Like Swansea, Hyde was unusual in receiving state funding. Moreover, the money which was used to set up Hyde Lads' Club in the first place came from a very unusual source. Before the First World War, Chief Constable Danby, in his capacity as 'one of the leading officials of the Poor Children's Trip to Blackpool' received an annual two guinea subscription from a local publican called Mr Jackson. Danby came to suspect that Jackson was allowing his hotel to be 'used for gambling', so he refused to accept his subscription from then on as he could not 'accept a gift which might be looked upon as an attempt to influence him.' The publican decided to leave Hyde as Danby was making 'it too hot for him to stay', and relocated to Blackpool where he worked as 'a commission agent for many years'. However, he continued to send his annual two guinea subscription to the Poor Children's Trip to Blackpool fund, and upon his death left 'the whole of his fortune', which amounted to £3,000, to Danby who used the interest to fund the club. According to a friend of Jackson's, who conveyed the news of the legacy to Danby, he had muttered 'some swear words' about Danby 'having driven him out of Hyde', and added that: '“But he's doing a fine work at Hyde for the kiddies, and the old ---- deserves it.”'<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1942*, p. 5.

<sup>294</sup> *Hyde Lads' Club Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 1956-57*, Hyde: J. Andrew & Co. Ltd., 1957, pp. 5-7.

<sup>295</sup> 'Club for Boys in Trouble: How Hyde Chief Constable Got the Money', *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 August 1928, p. 10.

Finally, an article about the opening night of the Hull club at Dansom Lane reported that the establishment of the club had partially been made possible by gifts from ‘local persons.’<sup>296</sup> This last point, to a small extent explains the diverse nature of police-led boys’ club funding. Clubs were funded by local individuals and organisations and the specific demographics accounted for who exactly funded the clubs in varying degrees. Donation amounts varied, but well represented across the board were middle-class individuals, local commercial enterprises, and figures who it is easy to imagine had a vested interest in the impact on juvenile delinquency in the local area, such as J.P.s, councillors, mayors and the police themselves. In this the police-led clubs, apart from the direct police involvement, did not depart particularly from NABC guidance or the example of Salford Lads’ Club, suggesting, once again, that police-led clubs often conformed largely to trends within the boys’ club movement as a whole. With regards to management the trend across the police-led boys’ clubs seems to be that high-ranking officers were involved in the management committees and low-ranking officers were involved in the daily activities of the clubs. Both management and funding of the clubs were in keeping with the nuanced picture of middle-class civic life established by the historiography of the middle classes detailed at the beginning of this chapter: police-led clubs provided a forum in which both middle-class and working-class individuals could theoretically work together towards shared goals. In this respect it was not just middle-class individuals who wanted to intervene in the lives of the boys who attended the clubs and remove them from undesirable environments; although it was mainly the middle classes who provided the funding to do so.

### **Doctors, dentists and the role of healthcare provision in police-led clubs**

A career in medicine or dentistry during the interwar period, as today, was a traditional middle-class profession. Doctors and dentists were middle-class individuals who had roles within boys’ clubs, including those led by the police, during the period. In order to investigate these roles it is helpful to place them within their pre-NHS historical context, briefly review the NABC’s stance on health alongside the comments of Llewellyn Smith, Henriques and A.E. Morgan, before turning to police-led clubs.

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<sup>296</sup> ‘Hull Police Boys’ Club: House Warming at Headquarters’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 27 October 1943, p. 4.

The historiography of pre-NHS healthcare presents a multifaceted picture, where healthcare was provided by a mixture of public, private and voluntary organisations and access was ‘dictated by geography and social class.’<sup>297</sup> Martin Gorsky argues that during this period such healthcare providers often worked independently of one another, with mixed results. He states that while ‘the public sector delivered general practitioner (GP) services to insured workers through the state national health insurance (NHI) scheme’, local government ‘covered environmental health, isolation and general hospitals and a wide range of personal services addressing tuberculosis, venereal diseases, mental illness, and maternity and child welfare’, the private sector ‘provided nursing homes and GP attendance at commercial rates’ and voluntary provision included ‘acute care hospitals’, and ‘a range of other therapeutic and clinical services.’ This patchwork of services although seemingly wide-ranging tended to work independently of one another, ‘voluntary hospitals’ for example ‘often lacked any mechanism for conferring with neighbouring institutions and the competitive logic of fund-raising enforced an individualistic ethic.’<sup>298</sup>

Jane Lewis on the other hand has argued that there was evidence of co-operation between the public and voluntary sectors in pre-NHS Britain. She maintains that although ‘voluntary organisations were never wholly able to call the tune in respect of social provision’ the concept of a ‘partnership with shared goals, founded on respect for Poor Law principles, and separate spheres of operation in respect of client groups was widely accepted.’<sup>299</sup> Added to this complex state of affairs was the potential for class conflict. Lucinda McCray Beier has noted that early in the twentieth century ‘public health providers struggled against working-class health care traditions,’ while ‘they were also trying to raise the scope of their own occupations,’ and the increase in medical ‘personnel’ such as ‘health visitors, school nurses’ and ‘school dentists’ reflected this.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Peter Davies, ‘Back to the future: healthcare before the NHS’, *British Medical Journal* 345 (2012), e6378.

<sup>298</sup> Martin Gorsky, ‘The Gloucestershire Extension of Medical Services Scheme: An Experiment in the Integration of Health Services in Britain before the NHS’, *Medical History* 50 (2006), p. 491.

<sup>299</sup> Jane Lewis, ‘The Voluntary Sector and the State in Twentieth Century Britain’, in Helen Fawcett and Rodney Lowe (eds), *Welfare Policy in Britain – The Road from 1945*, New York: Macmillan and St Martin’s Press, 1999, pp. 64-65.

<sup>300</sup> Lucinda McCray Beier, *For their Own Good: The Transformation of English Working-Class Health Culture, 1880-1970*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008, pp. 86-87.

In contrast, Nick Hayes in his study focusing on Nottingham, has argued that raising money for voluntary funded hospitals actually brought working-class and middle-class people together during the interwar period. They were united through a ‘common cause’ as ‘the city’s hospitals were treating more patients and from a broader social base’, working-class campaigners wanted to maintain hospital buildings provided by middle-class patrons as ‘working testimony of their indebtedness’. Both classes ‘shared beliefs and objectives which spread beyond those individuals immediately concerned – the activists from all classes who gave generously of their time – out into the broader community.’<sup>301</sup>

Finally, David Pomfret has written about the expansion of healthcare for young people during the interwar period ‘as medical experts, local government officials, and voluntary workers sought to improve the quality of the rising generation.’ Moreover, he adds, ‘rural spaces such as camps...were overlain with the “modern” apparatuses of inspection, performance evaluation, and the production of minutely calibrated assessments of physical development.’<sup>302</sup> The significance of camps in police-led boys’ clubs is discussed at length in Chapter Six, but what is especially relevant to this section is Pomfret’s depiction of the way ‘medical experts’ interacted with young people, during the first half of the twentieth century, suggestive of a slightly negative, or unsought-for, intervention in their physical health with their ‘minutely calibrated assessments.’

Thus, healthcare provision in the interwar period was far from straightforward. It involved participation from the public, private and voluntary sectors and fruitful co-operation between these sectors was not guaranteed. Middle-class advocates for better public health could be helped by equally passionate working-class activists or hindered by working-class traditions. Moreover middle-class experts were keen to produce healthy citizens for the future, to the extent that they were willing to directly intervene in the physical development of young people.

The NABC were an example of a voluntary organisation that were concerned about the health of the working classes, and wished to cooperate with other sectors, as evidenced

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<sup>301</sup> Nick Hayes, ‘“Our Hospitals”? Voluntary Provision, Community and Civic Consciousness in Nottingham Before the NHS,’ *Midland History* 37.1 (2012), pp. 104-105.

<sup>302</sup> David M. Pomfret, *Young People and the European City: Age Relations in Nottingham and Saint-Etienne 1890-1940*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, pp. 240-42.

by their publications throughout the 1930s. In their annual report for 1933-34 it was emphasised that 'more progressive Club Leaders' sought 'to promote the club ideal of physical fitness' by cooperating with 'Medical Professions' and 'Hospitals', through which the club could 'arrange for medical examinations and in some cases for treatment.'<sup>303</sup> In addition, their journal *The Boy* ran a series of articles concerned with the health of boys' club members championing well-run physical fitness classes in clubs. Physical fitness was seen as essential for general health, a healthy mind and was linked to citizenship through the concept of fitness of the nation. All club leaders were expected to read a report issued by the British Medical Association on the role of physical education.<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, good dental health was seen as crucial in the maintenance of good health and fitness. In 1938 one particular article concluded that 'bad teeth are the cause of half the ill-health of working men and women, and that serious deterioration occurs in the teeth of youngsters between the time of their leaving school and the age of 18 are facts which should concern every club leader and emphasise the importance of dental inspection.'<sup>305</sup> Indeed bad teeth, it was claimed, could cause 'toxic neurasthenia' in children and 'joint affections, anaemias, gastro-intestinal,' 'skin, eye and nervous conditions' and 'dyspepsia'.<sup>306</sup>

Llewellyn Smith summed up views on clubs and healthcare at the time, arguing that 'in a growing number of clubs' it was felt that no programme of physical activities and games would adequately support the health and welfare of the members unless it was 'accompanied by a regular medical examination.'<sup>307</sup> Moreover, Basil Henriques went as far as to argue that 'ideally the club doctor should also share in the general activities of the club,' and the 'boys should look upon him not only as their doctor but as their friend.'<sup>308</sup> Morgan devoted a whole chapter of his book *Young Citizen* to 'health and

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<sup>303</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Building for Citizenship, Annual Report, 1933-4*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1934, p. 8.

<sup>304</sup> Anonymous, 'Fitness and the Medical Profession', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 9.4 (1936), pp. 367-371; Anonymous, 'Fitness and Physical Trainers', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 9.4 (1936), pp. 360-366; Anonymous, 'The Health of Boys', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 6.4 (1934), pp. 141-144.

<sup>305</sup> Anonymous, 'Look to their Teeth', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 11.4 (1938), p. 689.

<sup>306</sup> 'Look to their Teeth', p. 690.

<sup>307</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour*, p. 157.

<sup>308</sup> Basil Henriques, *Club Leadership To-day*, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 177.

welfare'. He advocated a holistic approach to achieving good health in young people writing:

The doctor, the dentist and the nurse play a most important part, but they can do little if the boy or girl lacks a good house, food, light, air and clothing...

We must not shut our eyes to the immense waste of citizenship and eventual personal pain and misery which flow from disease, maldevelopment and poor physical condition too prevalent among adolescents. Apart from medical attention the problem must be tackled from three directions...<sup>309</sup>

The three directions he cites were improvement in socio-economic conditions – the necessity of households with enough money to provide good housing, fresh air and exercise, as well as food –, education, and 'the conditions in which young wage-earners work.'<sup>310</sup>

It has been established that good health was seen as of paramount importance as expressed by the main voices of the boys' club movement in the interwar period. They saw it as complementary to physical fitness in creating healthy citizens, through cooperation with the medical profession and the direct participation of its practitioners in club life. Medical intervention was important but it was only effective when placed alongside improvements in education and living and working conditions. It is interesting to investigate to what extent these ideas were reflected in police-led clubs.

At police-led clubs the role of doctors and dentists was pragmatic and in some cases educational. In Swansea 'honorary doctors attended club sessions to be aware of any boys who were physically unfit, possibly due to under nourishment or other conditions.'<sup>311</sup> Similarly, at Manchester a doctor and dentist played an important role in providing essential healthcare to boys who otherwise may have found it difficult to access. T.H. Blench was appointed as their honorary medical officer and H.B. Dumughn as their honorary dental surgeon.<sup>312</sup> Blench was specifically thanked in their annual report for 1938-39, 'for his kindness in examining all the lads prior to Camp, and also for his readiness at all times to help in the work of the Club.'<sup>313</sup> Also included in the annual report was a statement from Dumughn who wrote about the problematic 'unprovided-for

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<sup>309</sup> Morgan, *Young Citizen*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, pp. 70-71.

<sup>311</sup> Barber, 'Straight and True', p. 2.

<sup>312</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p.5.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid, p. 13.



period' which fell 'between school-leaving age and qualification for dental benefit under the National Health Insurance Scheme' when young adults could only secure 'emergency treatment.' This gap was later remedied by the NHS. In addition, he revealed that 'of the 42 lads examined, only four could be passed as dentally fit. Twenty accepted treatment, but only 11 allowed this to be completed,' adding that the scheme was a 'very important help to making the lads fit, and more beneficial work will be done as dental education progresses.'<sup>314</sup> Dumughn was thanked for his, 'time, thought and materials...so readily given in furtherance of this dental welfare work throughout the year.'<sup>315</sup> However, that only 11 boys allowed their treatment to be completed indicates the resistance that medical personnel could encounter in some working-class environments as highlighted by McCray Beier.<sup>316</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, the success of the club at Norwich was perceived by contemporary commentators as apparent not just through its impact on juvenile crime in the area but in the reduction of VD cases in the city. In the club 'three medical practitioners' from 'the City' were in attendance. They devoted 'great personal interest' to the aims of the club and helped with its division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade by giving the boys essential training. Club members in the brigade attended 'in full uniform' at football matches and other large public events and 'every night at each theatre, music hall and cinema to assist anyone requiring first aid' and some even 'enrolled for blood transfusion service.'<sup>317</sup> In this sense, members were trained to perpetuate the health benefits of the club by taking their skills out into the local community.

Without statistical data showing the proportion of teenagers who were under the regular care of a doctor within the clubs, it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions about the impact of their work. However, doctors and dentists may have been conspicuous presences at police-led boys' clubs and played an important role within them in the pre-NHS era, providing healthcare that would otherwise be unavailable in a system that could be inconsistent in its accessibility. Moreover, in doing so the police-led clubs were taking on board the advice and guidance of the NABC, and experts on youth, regarding the

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid, pp. 16-17.

<sup>315</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 17.

<sup>316</sup> McCray Beier, pp. 86-87.

<sup>317</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, pp. 11-12.

relationship between health and physical fitness and ultimately citizenship. Thus, police-led clubs could be viewed as environments where different classes came together under a common cause, which is an example of how middle-class contribution could work. Rather than intervening unhelpfully in the health of young people medical practitioners could have simply been pragmatic in taking the opportunity to provide healthcare where it was needed. As will be seen in the following chapter, Norwich was not the only club to provide first aid training, so not only did boys' club members receive healthcare; they were able to, to a lesser extent, perpetuate its benefits within their local communities.

### **How were police clubs endorsed by royals and members of the peerage?**

In order to explore how police-led boys' clubs were endorsed by the royals and members of the peerage it is important to provide some historical context to their status within society, before moving on to investigate two figures that were associated with the police-led boys' clubs: the Duke of Gloucester and Earl Peel. There is not a great deal of historiography available on the relationship between the upper classes and youth movements, which is an ideal reason for investigating the relationship of upper-class individuals with police-led boys' clubs as it comments upon what the state looked like from a subjective perspective.

Historian Ross McKibbin describes the monarchy in the interwar and immediate post-war period as being 'at the apex of the upper class,' although 'not typical of the upper class' they were 'inextricably connected to it by marriage and culture.'<sup>318</sup> He adds that the survival of the monarchy through this period, especially after the abdication crisis, was largely due to their ability to engage successfully with the public through regular engagements and by harnessing modern technology, such as radio and eventually television, to convey an image that was at once both 'magical' and 'domestic'.<sup>319</sup> According to McKibbin, during the interwar period the peers, created by the sovereign as directed by the Prime Minister, 'remained tightly integrated into the political structure of the country, both as a form of patronage essential to non-Labour governments and as a contributor to their personnel.'<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 3.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, pp. 3-15.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

It was not unusual for royals to recognise the beneficial work of youth movements throughout the period. In 1935, for example, King George V marked his Silver Jubilee by taking up the suggestion from the Prince of Wales to approve that ‘the national tribute to the Silver Jubilee should be a fund for the development of the Youth Service Movement.’<sup>321</sup> In October 1938 King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited the boys’ club at Norwich, where they were received by Dain and viewed the gymnasium, model boxing ring, and library, and learnt that the club had ‘football and cricket sections, that the members’ were ‘taught to swim’, that they had formed a division of their own of the St. John Ambulance Brigade’ and ‘that on special-occasions’ some of the boys gave ‘valuable assistance as a “junior police force”’.<sup>322</sup>

The member of the royal family most active in youth service was the Duke of Gloucester; he was president of the NABC and oversaw their annual conferences.<sup>323</sup> In 1925, before he gained the title of the Duke of Gloucester, Prince Henry opened the new premises at Norwich Lads’ Club. It was reported in *The Times* that he: ‘Complimented Mr. Dain on the incalculable social value of the club which he had instituted,’ adding that a ‘very large number of boys had been helped...to become good citizens,’ finally congratulating ‘Mr. Dain, the founder, on his happy idea in solving the very difficult problem of what to do with boys of 14 and over in their leisure hours.’<sup>324</sup> At just 25 years of age Prince Henry would not have been that much older than some of the members, but his social status may well have prevented him from having any true empathy with club members. Some years later, the Duke of Gloucester visited another of the clubs focused on in this study when he laid the foundation stone for Lancaster Lads’ Club new club premises on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1937.<sup>325</sup> Most indicative of the Duke of Gloucester’s relationship with a police-led club is an article written by Jack Hayes (an ex police officer, trade unionist and Labour

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<sup>321</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Youth and the Future, Annual Report, 1934-1935*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1935, p. 3.

<sup>322</sup> ‘Royal Visit to Norwich’, *The Times*, 31 October 1938, p. 11.

<sup>323</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Clubs for Boys: Being a Statement of the Principles and Aims of the Boys’ Club Movement*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1930, p.1.

<sup>324</sup> ‘Prince Henry at Norwich’, *The Times*, 3 June 1925, p. 9.

<sup>325</sup> ‘Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979: Lancaster Boys Club Golden Jubilee 1929-1979 Souvenir Brochure’, Lancaster Boys and Girls Club, at [http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more\\_info.asp?current\\_id=307](http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk/more_info.asp?current_id=307), accessed 26 February 2015, p. 2.

politician)<sup>326</sup>, the parliamentary correspondent for *The Police Review*, in noting the sudden death of the Chief Constable of Hyde, which commented:

Mr. Danby was a real father, not only in his own home, but in his Police Force and his town. He founded the Boys' Club for the poorer lads of the town. I remember the pride with which he spoke of it when sitting in my room at No. 12, Downing Street two years ago. He had brought his Mayor with him. He did so want a member of the Royal Family to open the club...The Duke of Gloucester graciously responded...H.R.H gladdened the heart of this worthy old Chief more than he ever thought. I know he will be sorry to learn he has passed away.<sup>327</sup>

What is particularly interesting about the passage quoted above is that it strongly illustrates the social strata of the period emphasising the role of paternalism. Danby acted as a 'father' to the boys' club as he occupied a middle-class position in the town's social structure alongside (literally in the case of the above quote) the town mayor. He used his and the mayor's status to appeal for royal endorsement of his cause. This was provided by the Duke of Gloucester, who though at the time many years younger than Danby, was in some sense also a father figure paternally gladdening 'the heart' of the 'old Chief' and bothering to remember him on his death.

In comparison, Manchester City Police Lads' Club received upper-class endorsement in the figure of Earl Peel (Arthur William Ashton Peel, 1901-1969, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Ashton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Peel<sup>328</sup>) who represented the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys' Clubs (LCABC). A clipping from the *Gorton & Openshaw Reporter* dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1938 recounted:

The visit of Earl Peel to the Boys' Club at Mill-street Divisional Police Station was a quiet affair, and I doubt if anybody outside the police station in Mill-street on Tuesday night knew that an earl was in the district...The boys of the Mill-street Club were delighted to have such a distinguished visitor, and they were all greatly interested to learn that Earl Peel is the great-grandson of Sir Robert Peel, founder of the police force.<sup>329</sup>

This account had a romantic quality of the nobleman in disguise amongst the commoners, adding to the impact of the visit; Earl Peel was portrayed as 'one of them'. Earl Peel also attended the official opening ceremony for Lancaster Boys' Club's new playing field on

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<sup>326</sup> 'Hayes, John Henry [Jack] (1887-1941), police officer trade unionist, and politician', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk>, accessed 30 November 2018.

<sup>327</sup> 'Sad Farewell', *The Police Review*, 8 January 1932, p. 14.

<sup>328</sup> <http://www.thepeerage.com/p8533.htm#i85329>, accessed 23 December 2015;

<http://www.ukwhoswho.co.libezproxy.open.ac.uk>, accessed 7 January 2018.

<sup>329</sup> GMPMA, Manchester City Police Lads' Club Papers, Alexander Aberdeen, Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, 1937-1942, p. 7.

21<sup>st</sup> June 1952, alongside the Mayor and Mayoress of Lancaster and the Alderman.<sup>330</sup> Most significantly, Peel provided a testimonial for Alexander Aberdein's application to become Second Assistant Chief Constable of Manchester City Police in 1941, and it is unlikely Aberdein would have obtained such an eminent referee under any other circumstances. He wrote:

Superintendent Aberdein has been the prime mover in the formation of the Manchester City Police Lads' Club at Mill Street Police Station, and the steady development and really great achievements of the Club are in a large measure due to his advice and encouragement.

Superintendent Aberdein understands Youth, its temptations, and its troubles, and I feel confident that here is a man who can very greatly assist in further development of activities in connection with the welfare of youth as a means of overcoming juvenile delinquency.<sup>331</sup>

Peel acknowledged Aberdein's role in founding the club and recognised him as a valid commentator on juvenile delinquency and as someone who was attempting to tackle the problem directly. Although Peel's testimony did not secure his promotion, his description of Aberdein fits the concept of 'moral hero' discussed earlier on in this chapter.

The Duke of Gloucester and Earl Peel's endorsement of the police-led clubs at Norwich, Manchester and Lancaster would have given the clubs legitimacy on a national level and presence within the national boys' club movement as a whole. However, their involvement with the clubs is not surprising given that the Duke was president of the NABC and the Earl was active in LCABC, and their visits did nothing to distinguish the police-led clubs from other boys' clubs as they would have been paid as part of doing the club rounds generally. However, what is fascinating is Aberdein's use of Earl Peel as a referee. As already explored, Aberdein, originally hailed from a working-class background and it is an interesting factor of his upward social mobility that the club gave him the opportunity to harness an upper-class connection when seeking further promotion. The examples of the Duke of Gloucester and Earl Peel give a subjective insight into the relationship between the clubs and such men and comment upon the social strata of the period.

## Conclusion

Police-led boys' clubs presented elements of both a bottom-up working-class and a top-down middle-class initiative and therefore, although they were concerned about juvenile

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<sup>330</sup> 'Extracts from Souvenir Brochure 1979', p. 3.

<sup>331</sup> Copy of Testimonials, p. 4.

delinquency and sought to remove boys from unsuitable environments, were not purely an example of middle-class interventionism. The middle-class Chief Constables who founded the clubs fitted into the broad definition of middle-class given at the beginning of this chapter. Although they had mostly begun their careers as working-class Police Constables, they eventually rose through the ranks to command valued places in local hierarchies, as moral guardians of their local communities. Moreover, the fact that they had risen through the ranks enabled them to gain respect amongst their men. The management of the police clubs was a forum where working-class and middle-class people could work together towards shared goals; although they were predominantly funded by local middle-class individuals. In addition, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters, the police-led clubs did not particularly depart from the boys' club movement as a whole. In this case, there is evidence of homogeneity in that middle-class individuals figured heavily in the funding of the clubs, doctors and dentists provided much needed healthcare – while promoting the connection between health, fitness and citizenship –, and in the patronage of upper-class individuals such as the Duke of Gloucester and Earl Peel.

## **Chapter Five: Masculinity and physicality in police-led boys' clubs**

### **Introduction**

The previous three chapters place the police-led boys' club within a spatial and cultural context, having looked at the role of the clubs within the national boys' club movement as a whole and placed them within the context of working-class and middle-class cultures. It is now possible to embark upon a more focused case study by considering the significance of the roles of masculinity and physicality within the clubs, and it is the theme of masculinity that dominates the second half of the thesis. The role of masculinity or masculinities in the police-led club with particular regard to the concept of 'manliness' has been touched on already and was inextricably linked with the idea of creating good citizens. To fully explore this, it is useful to ask the following five questions: Firstly, what does the popularity of a range of sports and physical pursuits in the clubs in the interwar period, tell us about how restraint, violence and manliness were used for positive aims? Secondly, in what ways did the use of energetic pursuits in the clubs subscribe to notions of 'manliness' and reinforce gender conformity? Thirdly, how did the offer of energetic pursuits and camaraderie between the club members and between the boys and the police officers, provide an alternative to friendship found on the streets? Fourthly, what was the significance of a strong work ethic in the police-led clubs? And finally, how did the expression of masculinity and physicality within the clubs relate to the concept of nation-building and citizenship?

### **Sports and physical pursuits in police-led boys' clubs**

Before considering the significance of the range of sports and physical pursuits that were on offer in the police-led boys' clubs, it is useful to review the historiography of masculinity covering from the late nineteenth century, through to the first half of the twentieth century especially with regards to the relationship between masculinity and interpersonal violence. Once the historiography has been established it is useful to look at what sort of activities were on offer across the whole boys' club movement, before looking at the range of activities on offer in the individual police-led clubs with a view to what they say about how masculinity and physicality were used in the clubs and whether they were in keeping with the boys' club movement as a whole.

A range of historians have written about the history of masculinity focusing on related themes such as image, violence, industrialisation and class. Andrew Davies has written extensively about masculinity and violence in industrial cities, across the late nineteenth century and into the interwar period; his research shows change and continuity in rough and respectable versions of masculinity. He contrasts the “hard” man violence of the late nineteenth century Manchester ‘scuttling’ gangs where ‘gang violence was rooted in working-class codes of toughness and manliness’ that enabled young men to ‘acquire considerable kudos and peer group recognition’; with ‘the alternative models of virtuous manhood’ such as ‘the breadwinner or the respectable artisan.’<sup>332</sup> Moreover, his research into Glasgow street gangs of the 1930s shows a continuance of the “hard” man ideal in the interwar period, when gang membership provided young men with ‘considerable cultural capital’, as they ‘cultivated reputations as criminal specialists and “hard” men.’<sup>333</sup>

Historians John Archer and Shani D’Cruze have both explored in some depth the relationship between masculinity and interpersonal violence. Archer highlights that during the second half of the nineteenth century men across the social spectrum admired fighting and viewed physicality as an essential aspect of masculinity; fighting could be used to defend one’s reputation or enhance one’s status.<sup>334</sup> In addition D’Cruze in relating interpersonal violence with citizenship, argues that citizenship required an approach to personal conduct that upheld the social and moral order and avoided interpersonal violence. However interpersonal violence was not in itself condemned and could be regarded as legitimate in certain contexts as the ‘possibility of violence remained entrenched within the social and imaginative framework of the ‘everyday’.<sup>335</sup>

John Tosh in investigating the masculinities in an industrialising society during the ‘long nineteenth century’ highlights a difference in attitude towards interpersonal violence evident in bourgeois and working-class masculinities. Bourgeois masculinity typified by a strong ‘work ethic, the cultivation of the domestic sphere, and the curtailment of interpersonal violence’ touched less than half the male population. Moreover, the middle

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<sup>332</sup> Andrew Davies, ‘Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford’, *Journal of Social History* 32 (1998), pp. 349-69.

<sup>333</sup> Andrew Davies, ‘Street Gangs, Crime and Policing in Glasgow during the 1930s: The Case of the Beehive Boys’, *Social History* 23.3 (1998), pp. 251-67.

<sup>334</sup> John Archer, ‘Men behaving badly?’ Masculinity and the uses of violence, 1850-1950,’ in Shani D’Cruze (ed). *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950* (Pearson Education Limited, 2000) p. 41.

<sup>335</sup> Shani D’Cruze (ed) *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950* (Pearson Education Limited, 2000) p. 1.



classes shied away from violent masculinities as part of their identity while the ‘working population...lived by quite different masculine codes.’<sup>336</sup>

Thus, at the start of the twentieth century interpersonal violence could be seen as a normative aspect of male working-class life. However, John Carter Wood notes that the ‘development of a “civilised” mentality of violence’ in the late nineteenth century permeated through to the working classes, ‘reshaping cultural attitudes, helping to forge new contours of identity and interacting with the elaboration of state and authority.’<sup>337</sup> He adds that this civilising process was not simply imposed from above but ‘the self-adoption of new attitudes to violence was an important part of working-class culture.’<sup>338</sup> Wood argues that in the nineteenth century the ritualistic fist-fight was an example of how working-class men used interpersonal violence in a restrained manner to settle disputes and avoid the necessity of recourse to the law, as a form of self-policing.<sup>339</sup> However, by the late nineteenth century gradual acceptance of ‘police authority’ by ‘working-class communities’ meant that ‘traditional forms of order maintenance were exchanged for greater individual self-control; legitimate violence, and thus protection, was delegated to the state.’<sup>340</sup>

Historian Louise Jackson has shown that police used violence in a restrained way to informally discipline youths. She argues that ‘police memoirs and oral history interviews regularly refer to the dispensation of a “clip” or a “cuff” around the ear as one of an accepted range of informal modes of street discipline directed at children.’<sup>341</sup> Although, occasionally, as Clive Emsley has highlighted, this sort of discipline could go too far and erupt into uncontrolled bouts of violence such as the 1957 ‘Thurso Boy’ scandal where two Caithness Police Constables took a boy into an alley and assaulted him after he had sworn at them in a café. This resulted two years later in a government inquiry and the publication of a report that criticised the police.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> John Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914’, *Journal of British Studies* 44.2 (2005), p. 342.

<sup>337</sup> John Carter Wood, ‘A Useful Savagery’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9.1 (Spring, 2004), p. 35.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>339</sup> John Carter Wood, ‘Self-Policing and Policing the Self: Violence, Protection and the Civilizing Bargain in Britain’, *Crime, History and Societies*, 7.1 (2003), p. 112.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 117-119.

<sup>341</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 39.

<sup>342</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*, London: Quercus, 2009, p. 251

Therefore, in briefly reviewing the history of the relationship between masculinity and violence there seems to be evidence of both continuity and change from the late nineteenth into the first half of the twentieth century. Interpersonal violence was an aspect of working-class identity which became less acceptable as time progressed due to challenges from citizenship, the state, and notions of respectability. Although it was still seen as a legitimate course of action for those belonging to gangs or for certain individuals (even in the police). Before commenting on how this provides a context for boys' club activities it is useful first to outline why such activities offer an important case study for the history of masculinities and to look more specifically at the historiography of masculinity with regards to boys' leisure pursuits.

Pat Ayers in her study of interwar and post-war Liverpool has demonstrated that traditional notions of masculinity persisted as men's 'sense of self had a particularly local slant' and ultimately the economic restructuring of the post-war era 'did nothing to challenge the status, privileges, rights and priorities of men relative to women in either the work place or the home.'<sup>343</sup> Despite transition from jobs that involved hard, dangerous outdoor labour to new industries which involved work on a production line, for example, traditional notions of manliness persisted due to 'the ability of masculinity to remake itself in order to accommodate change without damaging men's sense of themselves as true men served to ensure that...the experience of manliness persisted.'<sup>344</sup> She concludes, for masculinity to be a valuable concept to historians they must explore practices that were historically and spatially specific.<sup>345</sup> Thus, focusing on masculinity in boys' clubs, and more specifically in police-led boys' clubs could provide a historically and spatially specific case study.

Craig Heron's work investigates interwar masculinities in the Canadian industrial town of Hamilton spanning the boy's experience of masculinities in the home, school, street, work place and leisure activities.<sup>346</sup> Young working-class males experienced 'distinctive

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<sup>343</sup> Pat Ayers, 'The making of men: masculinities in interwar Liverpool,' in Margaret Walsh (ed) *Working Out Gender: Perspectives from Labour History* (Ashgate, 1999) p. 66.

<sup>344</sup> Pat Ayers, 'Work, Culture and Gender: The Making of Masculinities in Post-War Liverpool', *Labour History Review* 69.2 (2004), p. 159.

<sup>345</sup> Ayers, 'The making of men', p. 80

<sup>346</sup> Craig Heron, 'Boys Will be Boys: Working-Class Masculinities in the Age of Mass Production', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69, Working-Class Subjectivities and Sexualities (2006), pp. 6-34.

class-based gender identities' in the city. These were delineated by 'structures of class and ethnic or racial subordination', 'economic scarcity' that limited 'play space', 'job prospects' and 'recreational options'; 'his behaviour' was controlled by authority figures such as 'parents', 'teachers', 'policeman' and 'bosses'. Within this limited field young men developed 'often contradictory masculine practices' and 'took pride in using heavy manual labor, in physically demanding play (whether sports or drinking), in arguments and fights, in sexual conquests – generally undertaken as some kind of exuberant performance in a public setting.<sup>347</sup> Even though some working-class boys pursued more respectable pastimes such as reading or playing a musical instrument, they still experienced 'contradictory tendencies between self-indulgent irresponsibility and deeply ingrained commitments to the collective solidarity owed to family and workmates' and 'constructed their masculine identities largely as survival mechanisms.' Ultimately, however, 'the explosion of youthful team sports, the sedateness of most public drinking spaces, the compassionate socializing with girls and women, and the serious unionizing efforts suggested a taming of the rougher edges.'<sup>348</sup>

Bearing in mind Ayer's advice about historically and spatially specific case studies, Heron's research still illustrates the complex nature of interwar youthful masculinities in the industrial city, showing that leisure pursuits that defined masculine identity could involve anything from interpersonal violence 'in arguments and fights', to 'physically demanding' sports, to sedate activities such as reading. A range of activities from energetic sports to more sedentary pastimes were in evidence in the interwar boys' club movement in England and Wales and it is useful to have a closer look at these before considering the activities on offer in police-led clubs.

As seen in the previous chapter, physical fitness was recognised by the boys' club movement as being inextricably linked to national fitness, citizenship and nation-building. However, NABC literature at the time promoted a whole range of club activities that went beyond just physical ones. Llewellyn Smith wrote in his 1930 guide to starting a boys' club that 'in no circumstances should a club specialise in one sport or game', and any on offer at the club 'whether physical or mental, to be practical and purposeful, should

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<sup>347</sup> Heron, 'Boys Will be Boys', p. 26.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

be recreative, educational and character forming.’<sup>349</sup> In the same publication he gave a definitive list of suggested club activities which he categorised according to location and type. Games could be ‘outdoor’: ‘football, cricket, athletics, harriers, paper chases, tennis, swimming, life saving, boating, quoits, hockey’ and ‘roller skating’; ‘indoor’: ‘boxing, physical training, gymnastics, pass ball, hand ball, wrestling, rope quoits, fencing, billiards, quoit tennis, badminton, skittles, ragball football, fives, miniature rifle shooting, P.T. tests, bounce ball, tumbling, club swinging, roller skating, ping-pong, chess, draughts’, and ‘midget golf’; or simply for ‘spare moments’: ‘bagatelle, darts, wall quoits, bumble puppy, giant’s stride, swings, bounce ball on wall, indoor curling, shove halfpenny, club improvement’, and ‘popular parlour games.’ Art and educational activities were either ‘physical’: ‘carpentry, leather work, basket work, book binding, boot repairing, kit making, folk dancing, highland dancing’ and ‘first aid’; or ‘mental’: ‘dramatics, debates, pierrots, Christy minstrels, band, orchestra, community singing, recitations, club magazines, drawing, choir, bell ringing, mock trials, mock parliament, reading, study circles, savings bank, wireless club, library and topical talks.’<sup>350</sup>

In his 1935 survey of London life and labour Llewellyn Smith summarized which activities were in reality available in most boys’ clubs in the interwar period and suggested what should be offered if possible:

Almost all clubs provide cricket, football, swimming, boxing, running and indoor games such as billiards, ping-pong, chess and drafts. There is usually some form of physical training or gymnastics, a canteen and a library. The better programmes include dramatics, debating society, handicrafts, drawing and other classes, and special features in certain clubs are music, fencing, rambling, magazine production, photography and gardening.<sup>351</sup>

This quote inferred that sporting activities provided the base-line of what was on offer in boys’ clubs and the better clubs provided a wider range of activities that included more sedate options.

In the 1930s the NABC promoted a wide range of non-sporting boys’ club activities including handicrafts, drama and reading. Handicrafts could include: ‘simple woodwork’, ‘beaten metal work’, ‘simple tinwork’, ‘bookbinding and marbling’, ‘basketry’, ‘toy making’, ‘lino block cutting’, ‘poster work and lettering’ and

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<sup>349</sup> Herbert Llewellyn Smith, *A Guide to Starting a Boys’ Club and Hints on its Management*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1930, p. 8

<sup>350</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *A Guide to Starting a Boys’ Club*, p. 23.

<sup>351</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour*, p. 158.

‘leatherwork, raffia work and rug making.’<sup>352</sup> The six main aims of providing handicrafts was summarised thus:

- (a) To develop the creative instinct.
- (b) To provide the boy with a life-long hobby.
- (c) To make the boy a handyman in his own home.
- (d) To counteract by the handling of raw materials the artificiality of his environment.
- (e) To encourage the appreciation of truth and beauty.<sup>353</sup>

The forth aim is particularly interesting as it is suggestive of the negative effects of the urban industrial environment that most boys’ club members would have lived and worked in. Encouraging the handling of natural materials may have been part of the club ethos that sought to provide annual and weekend camps, in the countryside, where boys could experience nature at first hand, a theme that is explored in the following chapter. Drama was promoted as possessing ‘an appeal to the adventurous spirit of the boy’ and providing ‘memory training, the ability to express oneself in good English, the appreciation of a situation working up a climax, the bodily control necessary for the appropriate gestures and right breathing...’<sup>354</sup> Thus, alternatives to sporting activities encouraged all kinds of skills and attributes. With regards to reading books these could be housed in a quiet room where activities such as chess, drafts and drawing could also take place.<sup>355</sup> ‘A Boys’ Club Library may be the centre of a life and interests comparable to those which are created by athletics of the club.’<sup>356</sup>

Consequently, in the interwar period there was evidence that the boys’ club movement, at least from the point of view of the NABC, was attempting to include a wide range of activities within its purview, that went beyond sporting or physical activities. In doing this it may well have been recognising that not all boys were sporty yet could still exhibit respectable manly qualities, appreciating, for example, the concepts of ‘truth and beauty’. However this was not the case with police-led clubs as sports dominated their schedules

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<sup>352</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *An Introduction to Handicrafts in Clubs*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1933, pp. 21-31.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>354</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Play Production in the Club*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, undated, p. 5.

<sup>355</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Club Libraries: Being Suggestions for the Organisation and Management of Libraries in Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, undated, p. 8.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

and by looking in detail at the activities on offer in these clubs it is possible to explore the role of masculinity within them.

Having established the historiography of masculinity, and considered what sort of boys' clubs activities were promoted by the NABC, it is fascinating to take a detailed look at the activities on offer in the police-led clubs. As noted in previous chapters, there is evidence for the existence of at least fifteen boys' clubs in England and Wales in the interwar and immediate post-war period that were mainly founded by Chief Constables, run by or with the assistance of police officers, or had management committees staffed by police officers.<sup>357</sup> This chapter, however, will focus in particular on Norwich Lads' Club (founded in 1918), Manchester City Police Lads' Club (founded in 1937) and to some degree on Hyde Lads' Club (1928), Lancaster Boys' Club (1929) and Swansea Boys' Club (1933). Such clubs were aimed at young males and membership was generally 'open to lads between the ages of 14 and 18.'<sup>358</sup> Bearing in mind Llewellyn Smith's exhaustive list of what boys' clubs could offer, physical pursuits dominated the schedule of activities at police-led boys' clubs during the period. The table below shows the comparative activities on offer in the clubs under investigation:

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<sup>357</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 251-253.

<sup>358</sup> 'Boys' Club Organized By Police', *The Times*, 12 Aug 1936, p. 8.

**Table 1.2 main activities available in police-led clubs in interwar and immediate post-war period**

Club	Hull City Police Boys' Club <sup>359</sup>	Hyde Lads' Club <sup>360</sup>	Manchester City Police Lads' Club <sup>361</sup>	Norwich Lads' Club <sup>362</sup>	Swansea Boys' Club <sup>363</sup>
Activities	Boxing Camping Football Harvesting Swimming	Archery Athletics Basketball Boxing Camping Cricket Cycling Football Gymnastics Indoor games Rambling	Boxing Camping Cricket Cycling Fencing Field sports Football First aid Gymnastics Indoor games Physical training Swimming & life saving Table tennis	Band Boxing Camping Cricket Drama First aid Football Gymnastics Indoor games 'Junior Police Force' Reading Swimming & life saving	Camping Cricket First aid Fishing Football Indoor games Music Reading Swimming

The activities in the above table were mainly those that were current at the clubs in the 1930s and 1940s. Due to the scarcity of extant annual reports it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the activities on offer over a long period of time. With the exception of Hyde where the information is taken from a 1957 report and a memorandum (not drawn on in the above table) that described the activities offered at Norwich in 1961 as including band, billiards and snooker, boxing, canoeing, darts, football, gymnastics, P.T., sailing, St. John Ambulance, swimming and table tennis;<sup>364</sup> it is necessary to focus upon the 15 year snapshot available from 1932-1947 and consider what these activities reveal about that specific time period. Football was available at all the clubs; and boxing, cricket,

<sup>359</sup> This is not a definitive list, as there are no annual reports extant for Hull. Another Hull Boxing Show', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 24 January 1945, p. 4; 'Police Club Boys in Camp', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 7 August 1947, p. 4; 'Hull Police Boys FC', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 6 May 1947, p. 6; 9 September 1947, p. 4; 'Police Boys' Club Harvesters', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 12 June 1944, p. 3; 'Police Boys' Club Gala', *The Daily Mail* (Hull).

<sup>360</sup> *Hyde Lads' Club Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 1956-57*, Hyde: J. Andrew & Co. Ltd., 1957, p. 8.

<sup>361</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9; Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*.

<sup>362</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>363</sup> Swansea Boys' Club, *The Work Goes on! Swansea Boys, Club Annual Report 1938*, Swansea: Swansea Boys' Club, 1938, pp. 8-11.

<sup>364</sup> 'Memorandum respecting existing and required accommodation, helpers, equipment, etc' (1961).

gymnastics and swimming in all but one in each case, revealing a preference for competitive and team sports. Camping was popular in all the clubs and this phenomenon is addressed in depth in the following chapter. Less popular were: sports demanding expensive equipment, such as archery, cycling and fencing; non-competitive outdoor pursuits such as rambling and fishing; and more intellectual pastimes such as reading and drama. With the exception of the band and 'Junior Police Force' at Norwich there was little evidence of activities requiring a uniform or those of a military flavour such as drill.

Dain established the 'Junior Police Force' at Norwich in 1932. The boys, chosen from club members, were aged between 16 and 18 and their main tasks were to assist as messengers, help out at 'important civic functions', and to 'keep an eye on the car parks at public events.' They practised drill and 'were given uniforms cut down from those discarded by the police force.' The 'Junior Police Force' was run by a retired Police Constable, Albert Tuddenham, and his wife. One old boy, Chris Watt, who joined the boys' club in 1934, recalled that he was selected for the 'Junior Police Force' for 'two main reasons.' Firstly, he 'attended a grammar school and had a longer holiday in August and was therefore available for full-time duty when the British Association for the Advancement of Science came to Norwich in 1934.' Secondly, and 'perhaps more importantly' he stressed, 'they had a uniform and cap' which fitted him.<sup>365</sup> Unfortunately, no other information, aside from that cited in Walker's history of the club at Norwich has been found, but it is interesting to speculate whether Dain's 'Junior Police Force' had any connections with the later movement to establish Police Cadets.

Figures 1-12 in the Photo Appendix relate to a range of activities that were on offer at Norwich Lads' Club and Hyde Lads' Club, and include a photograph of the 'Junior Police Force' at Norwich. The images cover roughly the same time period; the photographs at Norwich were taken in the 1920s-30s and the ones at Hyde, more specifically, between 1932 and 1933. The Norwich images look quite staged whereas the Hyde ones are less so, and may have been used to promote the club, whereas the Hyde photographs were snaps kept in an album. It is fascinating to look at each photograph in more detail in order to further explore the role of sports and physical pursuits in police-led boys' clubs. Figure 1 depicts boxing instruction taking place inside Norwich Lads' Club. With the help of

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<sup>365</sup> Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, p. 19



Robert Walker's history of Norwich Lads' Club it is possible to identify the adults in the picture.<sup>366</sup> At the far left is Supt. Christie, next to him dressed in civilian clothes is Dain, on the far right stands the Lord Mayor of Norwich Thomas Glover. The man instructing the boys in the middle is the 7st 6lb boxing champion Herbert Rix. The image depicts a small crowd of boys looking on with interest as Rix physically guides the boys' gloved hands with his own. Figure 2 shows a boxing championship at Norwich, Dain appears in the left of the picture, this time wearing his police uniform, there is another officer in uniform, a mayor and what looks like the Duke of Gloucester at the right-hand side of the picture. A large crowd looks on: boys up above and men and women down below. The two pictures underline the centrality of boxing within the club schedule: both its popularity as a daily activity and its ability to draw large crowds. Moreover, they show how boxing at the clubs was played out in a restrained way under the guidance of experts, such as Rix, and those who had a high social standing, such as Dain, the Mayor and the Duke of Gloucester. The remaining three photographs of Norwich Lads' Club reveal the variety of activities available there. Figure 3 depicts Dain inspecting the club's 'Junior Police Force', in the building's gym. There appears to be more than one rank in the force as some of the uniforms sport piping on the trousers, caps and jackets, although this could have simply resulted from the availability of cut-down uniforms. Figure 4 illustrates the club library of similarly bound books, a police officer passing down those from a shelf too high for the boys to reach. There is also some homely detail in the wall stencil decoration that can be seen at the far left of the photograph. Finally, in Figure 5 boys sing gathered around a piano against a painted backdrop.

Figures 6 and 7 depict gymnastics displays at both Norwich and Hyde. Gymnastics, like boxing, was popular in most of the police-led clubs. Gymnastics was a way of displaying the idealised body, collectively, to an audience. The audience in Figure 7 consisted of Chief Constable Danby, who stands to the left of the Mayor, with various other local worthies. David Pomfret has argued that in early twentieth century France gymnastics 'was configured as a militaristic and nationalistic activity and was associated with young males, while in England it was coded as feminine' as the 'Swedish method of gymnastics with its slow and gentle movements, emphasis on balance, and collective movement were

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<sup>366</sup> Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, pp. 24-5.

seen as appropriate for young females.<sup>367</sup> Nevertheless, the gymnastic displays depicted in these two photographs could have served as a statement that the clubs had disciplined the bodies of the boys, in keeping with contemporary concepts of masculinity and manliness.

Figures 8 and 9 show, respectively, Hyde Lads' Club 1932/33 football team and cricket team: team sports were also very popular in the clubs, especially those that did not require expensive equipment. Interestingly, a woman sits amongst the cricket team, hinting at the presence of women in the police-led clubs (a topic that is examined in more detail in the following chapter). This theme is further elaborated in Figure 10 which shows a club fund-raising event, a cricket match between ladies and elderly gentlemen. Figure 11, reveals the range of events which were harnessed to raise funds at Hyde which included fancy dress competitions. Finally, Figure 12 illustrates the typical urban setting of the majority of the police-led clubs, indeed boys' clubs in general: at least two chimneys can be seen behind the field in which that year's sports day took place.

Excluding Swansea Boys' Club, the activity that received the most coverage was boxing. That it dominated the schedules of police-led boys' clubs is evident from the meeting minutes, annual reports, lists of equipment and photographs of matches and tournaments that can be found in the archives of the Manchester and Norwich lads' clubs and countless newspaper articles about the clubs in Hull. Early in 1920 over 1000 people gathered on the occasion of Norwich Lads' Club second annual boxing tournament. The Lord Mayor entered the ring alongside Dain to distribute prizes and commented that 'he had watched every bout very keenly, and he had not seen any indication of a single boy approaching anything like losing his temper.'<sup>368</sup> The popularity of boxing at Norwich was emphasised by Dain in his 1932 pamphlet. He wrote that: 'Boxing is very popular; so popular that it takes three nights to complete the annual Club Competitions, and even the spacious club premises are unable to accommodate the parents, supporters and visitors who wish to

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<sup>367</sup> David M. Pomfret, *Young People and the European City: Age Relations in Nottingham and Saint-Etienne 1890-1940*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, p. 142.

<sup>368</sup> 'Norwich City Police – The Way to Handel the Juvenile Problem', *The Police Review*, 9 January 1920, p. 21.

attend on these occasions.’<sup>369</sup> In March 1939 the finals of the 21<sup>st</sup> annual boxing tournament of Norwich Lads’ Club was ‘watched by over 2000 people.’<sup>370</sup>

The sport was equally popular at the Manchester, its club organisers noted:

Club members who show any aptitude for Boxing are given every encouragement and regular instruction...Apart from its value as an aid to physical development, amateur Boxing usually develops in the pupil a fine sporting spirit and self-control. Its value in enabling the boys to look after themselves, should the necessity arise, will also be appreciated.<sup>371</sup>

Also:

Perhaps no sport is better for developing those fine, manly qualities we see so often displayed by these young boxers, who give and take hard knocks in the ring and come up smiling and the best of pals at the end of it.<sup>372</sup>

These quotes provide an insight into the motivation behind the teaching of boxing in police-led clubs, boxing was not only popular but taught self-discipline. At Norwich boys learnt to control their tempers and at Manchester they learnt ‘self-control’, self-defence and fairness, all characteristics that came under the umbrella of ‘manly qualities’. Moreover, it also fits with Carter Wood’s comments on the importance of violence within working-class culture, outlined earlier in this section. A fair fight was used in constructing a violent but rule-bound masculine community. In the early twentieth century the use of violence morphed from the ritualistic fist-fight used to settle disputes without recourse to the law, common in the nineteenth century, into a more restrained approach, which incorporated self-control and acceptance of police authority.

According to the Hull *Daily Mail*, Hull City Police Boys’ Club (which was spread across three sites) held its ‘first inter-club boxing tournament’ in January 1944; it was attended by the club president alderman J.L. Schultz.<sup>373</sup> A boxing tournament was organised by the ‘Hull Police Athletic Section’ in March 1945 to raise money for the boys’ club.<sup>374</sup> The tournament was fêted as the ‘first milestone in the Club’s history’. It was attended by the NABC’s ‘head national field secretary’ who opened the event, accompanied by the ‘civic leaders of the city’. The main attraction was the fight between the club team and

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<sup>369</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 13.

<sup>370</sup> ‘Norwich Lads’ Club’, *The Police Review*, 24 March 1939, p. 282.

<sup>371</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Annual Report for the Year 1940-41* (Warburton & Sons, Manchester, 1941) p. 6.

<sup>372</sup> *Annual Report 1938-9*, p. 9.

<sup>373</sup> ‘Police Boys’ Club Boxing: East Hull Wins Championship’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 29 January 1944, p. 4.

<sup>374</sup> ‘Another Hull Boxing Show’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 24 January 1945, p. 4.

the Nottingham Youth boxing Team, also there were a variety of contests between police officers from across the country. The tickets were available from all the police stations in Hull, the police boys' clubs and the club secretary.<sup>375</sup> The club regularly sent boys to the Yorkshire Association of Boys' Clubs boxing championships, ten in 1946 and eight the following year.<sup>376</sup> In 1947, a '15 year-old' member of the club won 'national honours' at the NABC boxing championships in Leeds which had 'entries from over 2,000 boys' clubs'. The winner was 'trained throughout by Sgt. A.E. Mee' who accompanied him to all the games in the contest travelling to 'Leeds, Middlesbrough, Morecombe and Wolverhampton' in the process.<sup>377</sup>

The example of boxing at Hull shows that police-led clubs could compete seriously in boxing, developing regional and national champions. Returning to the themes explored in the historiography of violence, one can argue that boxing at police-led clubs was also a means to convert the everyday potential for interpersonal violence, through 'codes and restraints' into a quest for the right sort of manliness that aimed to produce ideal citizens. In doing this, they did not depart from the national boys' club movement as a whole; as mentioned above, Hull sent boys to NABC championships and a glance at Salford Lads' Club's annual reports in the late 1920s reveals a similar approach to the sport as that in Manchester's annual reports more than a decade later. The Salford Lads' Club annual report for 1925-26 detailed the boxing classes held in the club, noting that: 'classes were conducted by two "old boys" of the Club, who themselves got most of their training here, and who know, therefore, how important it is to teach not only the science of boxing but the art of controlling temper.'<sup>378</sup> The art of controlling temper was a concept inherent in police culture. Historian Chris Williams has written about how the new police from their inception were told to 'exercise restraint', command their tempers and conduct themselves 'with civility'. In this respect, Williams adds, through their conduct and

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<sup>375</sup> 'Hull Police Boys' Club: Big Bill of Boxing Next Week', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 2 March 1945, p. 4.

<sup>376</sup> 'Hull Boy Boxers in Finals', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 14 March 1946, p.4; 'Hull Boys Reach Boxing Finals', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 28 January 1947, p.6.

<sup>377</sup> 'Hull Boy Wins National Title', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 22 April 1947, p.5.

<sup>378</sup> T. Norman Barrett and Charles E. Cliff, *Salford Lads' Club Season 1925-26*, Salford: Salford Lads' Club, 1926, p. 5.

obligations policemen were ‘defined as the servant of every law-abiding member of the public.’<sup>379</sup>

In view of this, and based on Carter Wood’s research, it is possible to argue that the teaching of boxing in clubs to working-class boys by working-class police officers was a way to reinforce codes of using violence in a restrained way in keeping with notions of working-class respectability, with the added factor that police officers could be seen as the ideal legitimizers of violence in their role as arbiters of the state. Moreover, success in sports, especially boxing, was an alternative way of gaining a “hard” man reputation that Davies talks about in his research into the history of gangs. These notions are perhaps apparent in the following quote found in a collection of newspaper cuttings, kept by Aberdeen, founder of the club in Manchester, from an article concerning an event held at the club in 1939 stating:

Chief interest of the evening was centred in the boxing matches. All the bouts were fought at terrific speed, no quarter being asked or given. Several noses were made to bleed rather profusely. Some boxers showed excellent promise.<sup>380</sup>

Even though the reporter gleefully emphasises the bloodier aspects of the sport it is not necessarily antithetical to the concept of ‘codes and restraint’ as by saying ‘some boxers showed excellent promise’ there is an implication that some boys at least displayed skill. However, it is important to note that even amongst the police boxing had its detractors and briefly exploring the debate around the sport offers more context to its role within the clubs and the motivation behind its practice.

In 1940 the *Police Review* printed several articles concerning a debate about police boxing. The first was taken from Chief Constable’ W.S. Hughes’ ‘annual report to the Lincoln Watch Committee’, which suggested that boxing be ‘excluded from Police recreation, unless...under the strictest control.’ His argument rested on four main points. Firstly that the idea of boxing ‘fights’ was incompatible with that of ‘self-control’. Secondly, it was inappropriate that police were ‘knocking-out’ officers from other towns. Thirdly, all ranks should be involved, recreation and boxing included only the ‘lower ranks’, ‘the superior officers being satisfied to occupy seats at the ringside’ and give out

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<sup>379</sup> Chris A. Williams, *Police Control Systems in Britain, 1775-1975: From parish constable to national computer*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014, p. 67.

<sup>380</sup> Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Press Cuttings.

the prizes. Finally, he maintained that discipline problems could emerge in the future if ‘Constable “A” knocks out Constable “B”’ and ‘in due course Constable “B” is promoted to Sergeant or Inspector and Constable “A” remains as he was.’<sup>381</sup> On the same day the editorial section of the paper responded that:

Although Mr. Hughes finds it difficult to believe that boxing teaches self-control and helps a man to keep his temper, he may be assured that a man who cannot do both these things will never make a boxer. Also it is a good thing to learn how to take as well as give, punishment. That is where the Englishman excels in the ring by comparison with certain other nationalities...<sup>382</sup>

The paper printed a further answer to the Chief Constable the following week from Inspector Leonard Shipton of ‘Derby Borough Police’, ‘well known in Police boxing and Rugby circles.’ His counter argument centred upon the camaraderie felt between winners and losers after the matches which formed some of his ‘happiest recollections’, that he would wish to have any of his ‘opponents’ by his side if serving in the forces as to quote ‘Mr. Winston Churchill’ they showed ‘guts’. Moreover, he had ‘received more hard knocks and rough handling’ playing rugby. Finally, in response to Hughes’ fears regarding discipline he stated:

Whether as Constable, Sergeant, Inspector or Chief, I feel sure that on meeting or dealing with an old opponent, whoever won the boxing bout, and whatever the subject matter under consideration, the mutual feeling will be that both will always display the same respect, fairness and sportsmanship as was shown when they faced each other in the “ring”.<sup>383</sup>

Hughes answered his critics arguing amongst other things that ‘rowdy persons’ in the public crowd watching police fights may feel it was permissible to knock out police officers if ‘an opportunity came their way’, if an officer was being ‘sued in a civil court for damages on the ground that he has used unnecessary violence to a certain person’ being able to pack ‘an extremely powerful punch’ could go against him, and that press coverage of boxing matches did not improve the reputation of the police when using phrases such as ‘to hammer each other.’<sup>384</sup>

The significance of this debate is that it highlights police attitudes towards boxing and underlines some of the aims and motivations behind promoting it as a main activity in the police-led clubs. Hughes may well have been in the minority with his views but his

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<sup>381</sup> ‘Police Boxing: Chief Constables’ Strong Criticism’, *The Police Review*, 3 May 1940, p. 339.

<sup>382</sup> ‘A Critic of Police Boxing’, *The Police Review*, 3 May 1940, p. 338.

<sup>383</sup> ‘Police Boxing: An Answer to Mr. W.S. Hughes’, *The Police Review*, 10 May 1940, p. 355.

<sup>384</sup> ‘Police Boxing: A Letter from the Retiring Chief Constable of Lincoln’, *The Police Review*, 31 May 1940, p. 403.

worries also highlight problems that may have been encountered within the clubs concerning discipline and appropriate tone, especially when the boys interacted with the officers who trained them; and he also echoed contemporary concerns about police violence, as highlighted earlier by Emsley.<sup>385</sup> The enthusiastic rebuttals to Hughes' stance also reveal that it was likely that those who taught boxing and encouraged its practice in the clubs considered the sport as a means by which to engender self-control in boys and instil a sense of fair play while being able to defend themselves and others, characteristics that were seen to be national ones especially during wartime. The physical interaction between the boys and the police officers who instructed them in boxing may have become a positive extension or subversion of the informal disciplining of youths meted out by police officers, as explored by Bartie and Jackson.<sup>386</sup>

Furthermore, the *Police Review* provides fascinating insights into police attitudes towards masculinity. An anonymous police officer writing to the editor in January 1939, expressed his thoughts on 'masculinity and the police service' arguing:

The artisan, the countryman and the fisherman bring many good qualities to the Service. The student, the clerk and the shop-assistant make good Policemen, but do not enrich the Service with manly qualities to the same extent as do these others...Arduous sports are a good test of virile manliness. In boxing the Police Service has an enviable record, but surely the general standard is very low when all our potentialities are considered?

So far so normative, but what makes the letter really interesting is that he goes on to argue about the importance of education in improving masculinity. He states that 'duties and varying reliefs prevent the attendance at Evening Classes or other organised courses of study', 'the development of personality and cultural background receives no encouragement', and 'irregular hours' 'preclude all normal social activity', leaving officers 'isolated' and 'one-sided' in their development the result of which 'is a low general level of masculinity.'<sup>387</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that although activities such as handicrafts, drama and reading were far less common than sporting ones in the police-led clubs, (perhaps due to the prohibitively expensive equipment necessary), there is some evidence that the police-led clubs valued intellectual development. As mentioned above, drama was an activity

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<sup>385</sup> Emsley, *The Great British Bobby*, p. 251.

<sup>386</sup> Angela Bartie and Louise A. Jackson, 'Youth Crime and Preventive Policing in Post-War Scotland (c.1945-71)', *Twentieth Century British History* 22.1 (2011), p. 81.

<sup>387</sup> 'Masculinity and the Police Service', *The Police Review*, 27 January 1939, p.75.

on offer at Hull Police Boys' Club. Reading was seen as an important part of the activities at Norwich (see photo appendix) which, as noted above, had a library provided by the Carnegie Trust. Manchester certainly regretted that it did not provide a wider range of reading matter and aimed to remedy the deficit when the opportunity arose.<sup>388</sup>

The historiography of violence has revealed that masculinities were complex and not necessarily linear in development, they also manifested in a variety of ways encompassing both thuggishness and respectability. During the interwar period the NABC encouraged a range of activities in boys' clubs that included energetic and sedentary pursuits. Physical pursuits dominated the schedules in police-led boys' clubs, mainly competitive and team sports, with boxing being the activity that gained the most coverage. Boxing was popular because it was considered a respectable manly pastime that engendered self-control and a sense of fair-play. The use of the sometimes violent sport of boxing for positive aims, was not without controversy even then and even amongst the police, and intellectual pursuits were not necessarily considered as being incompatible with manliness. However, the police clubs perceived that they were doing the best they could to make boys manly with the facilities available to them.

### **Camaraderie between boys and police officers**

Historiography shows that many young working-class males spent their leisure hours on the street during the interwar period very much as they had done in the late nineteenth century. From the late nineteenth century boys' clubs had offered an alternative to the street, an environment that club organisers believed could lead boys astray towards criminality or simply physical and mental atrophy, and they continued to do so in the period under examination. Police-led boys' clubs attracted boys away from the city streets through the promise of camaraderie amongst not just the members but also between the officers and the boys.

Andrew Davies has written extensively about the leisure activities that young working men in Salford and Manchester participated in between 1900 and 1939.<sup>389</sup> He reveals that 'despite the growth of the cinema, communal, or informal leisure activities accounted for

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<sup>388</sup> *Annual Report 1940-41*, p. 6.

<sup>389</sup> Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-Class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-1939*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992.



most of the leisure time of young workers.<sup>390</sup> He adds that many young workers had no viable alternative to spending their leisure time on the street for ‘few had the inclination or the resources to spend all their free time in the cinema, and the cramped “two up two down” homes of Salford, and Manchester districts such as Ancoats and Hulme, could not accommodate nightly gatherings of youths.’<sup>391</sup> Boys that spent their leisure hours on the streets were referred to as ‘corner lads’ as they would hang about street corners in groups talking to one another or sometimes even singing and ‘throughout Manchester and Salford, working-class lads were known through their membership of street corner cliques.’<sup>392</sup> Much time on the street was spent talking about subjects as diverse as school, work, family, dancing, fashion and film stars. Social commentators saw the time spent in corner gangs as wasted time and the police ‘were caught between pressure from moral entrepreneurs, to clean up the streets, and pressure from working people who resented interference with established customs.’<sup>393</sup> Similarly, Brad Beavan notes continuity in working-class male leisure activities. He argues that leisure activities during the interwar period were essentially no different from those experienced at the end of the nineteenth century. Adding that if you ‘substitute cinema for the music hall’ there was a ‘broadly similar male youth leisure profile, which included street ‘loafing’, a commercial market for youth literature, and the existence of a proliferation of organised clubs and societies.’<sup>394</sup>

As discussed in previous sections about the vision behind club movements, tackling juvenile delinquency, and factors that motivated club leaders, the boys’ club movement as a whole embraced the idea of removing boys from the city streets so that they were not tempted into criminal behaviour for lack of alternative ways to divert their energies. Moreover, they promoted as ideal leaders ‘elder brother’ role models for the boys who garnered respect amongst the members rather than ruling with harsh discipline. Llewellyn Smith argued that ‘the street corner is a place not of choice but of necessity’ and the camaraderie that was found in the street corner gang could be replicated in a good boys’ club where it could be ‘expressed in a perfectly natural form’ and ‘the more easily be

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<sup>390</sup> Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p. 96.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid, p. 97.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid, p. 99.

<sup>394</sup> Brad Beavan, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, p. 176.

directed towards the good of society.’<sup>395</sup> He also argued that clubs should reduce ‘rules and regulations to a minimum’ and that club discipline should be based on ‘pride in a tradition’, which was further enhanced when ‘coupled with an appreciation of the responsibilities of self-government’. He added that this sort of discipline in clubs was still ‘very real.’<sup>396</sup> This is important, as once boys’ were tempted away from the streets the way club leaders interacted with them would ensure whether they stayed or not. Ideally, strictness or ill-discipline was avoided in favour of a friendly environment based on mutual self-respect.

There is plenty of evidence in the police-led clubs, especially Norwich, Manchester and Hyde, that they aimed to remove boys from the moral dangers to be found on the streets by providing them with alternative leisure pursuits in the clubs alongside the offer of friendship with both other members and the police officers who ran them. Returning to Dain’s 1926 address to the Chief Constable’s Association quoted in the above section, he highlighted the undue influence of the streets on ‘the boys of the country’ proposing the ‘manly pursuits’ and ‘tactful training’ to be found in his club as the ideal solution. In addition to this, he stated in his 1932 pamphlet on police welfare work amongst boys that:

The surroundings of his home life do not give a lad much chance for the healthy recreative use of his energies in his leisure time, the fall into evil ways is all too easy. Unless reasonable means, easily accessible, for healthy recreation, physical and mental, are within his reach, he begins to roam the streets aimlessly with companions similarly situated... a lad’s whole career may be made or marred according to whether the right environment and influence are brought to bear upon them.<sup>397</sup>

Implicit in this statement is that domesticity does not provide ‘healthy recreative use’ of a boy’s ‘energies’ as it goes against normative heterosexual gender conformity for boys, who are not old enough to take on the patriarchal role within the house; thus his only choice is ‘to roam the streets aimlessly’. Therefore, the club gives him an aim and saves him from ‘evil ways’ such as juvenile delinquency or sexual deviance. The club provides ‘the right environment’; by offering them camaraderie with other boys and officers and healthy energetic pursuits, and they are given the opportunity to flourish. Dain further argued that:

The innate instincts of fair play, good sportsmanship, and observance of the square deal in association with one’s fellows, are the natural qualities of the vast majority of boys, and what the

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<sup>395</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *Clubs for Boys*, p. 6.

<sup>396</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour*, p. 160.

<sup>397</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 6.

Club does is give to its members the opportunity of clean and healthy exercise and recreation in a jolly atmosphere of good comradeship and emulation, and leave the good results to follow naturally of themselves.<sup>398</sup>

The appeal to ‘instincts of fair play, good sportsmanship, and observance of a square deal’ echoes the rules and correct conduct inherent in the boxing contests held in such clubs. Thus, avoidance of the street can also be linked to using violence in a restrained way and conforming to gender norms. Moreover, the emphasis on ‘clean’ exercise implies that the club offered the opposite environment to the street where exercise could be metaphorically ‘dirty’ engagement in low-level criminal activity, or literally ‘dirty’ due to industrial pollution.

At Manchester City Police Lads’ Club, they claimed to relieve the ills of living within a densely populated urban area which caused boys to resort to finding their recreation on the streets:

Civilisation has resulted in a large percentage of the people living in close proximity in large towns. Unless our adolescents, in towns particularly, are provided with the means to healthy exercise and recreation, no one must be surprised if they run wild and become a nuisance to the rest of the community.<sup>399</sup>

The solution to the problem of ‘running wild’ also included the positive influence of the ‘elder brother’ in the guise of the police officer who:

No matter what their actual age, can play the role of decent elder brother to all their lads and keep in line with their development.<sup>400</sup>

These sentiments were already in evidence at Hyde ten years earlier when J. W. Danby, Chief Constable of Hyde, in his speech to the boys on the opening night of his club, inferred that through friendship (with him) members of his club would take the club ethos back onto the street, he claimed:

I want you boys and myself and all associated with the club to make the town better. When you see me in the street I shall want you to feel that I am your friend. We must all try to pull together, enjoy ourselves and help each other. This is your club. We want to please you.<sup>401</sup>

The idea of ‘friendship’ between boys and a Chief Constable however unlikely in reality, still underlined the aim of the clubs to keep boys ‘in line’ through camaraderie and respect rather than strict discipline. Indeed, Jeffrey Cope who took over as Warden and Club

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>399</sup> *Annual Report 1938-39*, p. 6.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>401</sup> ‘Chief Constable’s Boys’ Club’, *The Times*, Oct 06 1928, p. 9.

Leader of Hyde Lads' Club in 1959, wrote in their journal about the importance of homo-social camaraderie between club members and boys and their club leaders:

The biggest thrill of the last six months is the fantastic team spirit that has sprung up in the Club, the very warm approach between Leader and Boy, of the workman like efficiency of the Older Member and friendly attitude of every boy who knows and respects his Club, as he would his very own Valuable Possessions.<sup>402</sup>

Finally in encouraging 'friendship' between boys and officers the work of the police-led clubs was deemed to be even more effective for avoiding the ills of moral indoctrination that could put boys off being members, for example, Dain claimed:

Nothing sets up a mood of antagonism more promptly in such lads than the suspicion that they are being got at for the purposes of moral improvement...The work done in the running of the Club is based absolutely on our belief that the moral sense of the lads themselves is naturally and intrinsically good if it gets a fair chance; that it is not something that needs to be preached or ingeniously and subtly injected into them, but is there in themselves only needing opportunity for its own healthy growth and development.<sup>403</sup>

Of course that did not preclude the implicit indoctrination involved in encouraging the natural 'moral sense of the lads' through encouraging their engagement with 'manly' pursuits.

Thus, the police-led clubs in keeping with the wider boys' club movement aimed to remove boys from the streets by offering them alternative recreation in a friendly environment that avoided strict discipline, yet encouraged 'manly' self-control. The police clubs felt that they were doing excellent work in diverting the energies of boys from the streets, where they could be corrupted at the worst into committing violent acts or becoming sexual deviants, to the sportsmanship and camaraderie found within their clubs. The police perhaps felt the 'evil ways' of the streets even more than the average club leader, in that they encountered the worst of what the streets had to offer in the execution of their daily duties. The police club leaders sought to be 'elder brother' role models and 'friends' to club members by teaching them good sportsmanship and avoiding moral indoctrination. This concept of 'friendship' is explored further in the following chapters first within the context of the police club camp and then within the modern context of child protection safeguards.

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<sup>402</sup> Barton, Alan (ed.), *Outlook: The Journal of Hyde Lads' Club*, May 1960, p. 2.

<sup>403</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 15.

### **‘Manliness’ and gender conformity**

By exploring the historiography of sexuality and gender distinctions in the interwar period, fear of homosexuality and ideals of normative masculinity and citizenship that prevailed into the post-war period, ‘manliness’ is shown to be a chief concept of the police-led clubs. Manliness was an example of a normative gender role and could be expressed through engaging in energetic pursuits and displaying a ‘spirit of adventure’.

Attitudes towards ideal masculinity and gender conformity in the period under investigation have been explored by several historians. Tosh highlights that into the early twentieth century Britain’s industrialised society was ‘characterized by increasingly sharp category distinctions of gender and sexuality’.<sup>404</sup> Julia Grant writes about gender conformity in the first half of the twentieth century, where the “normal” boy became interchangeable with the “ideal” boy in the eyes of scientists and educators who supported the conventional notions of masculinity subscribed to by a young person’s peer group and further enforced them with ‘cultural artefacts’ such as ‘clothing’ and ‘toys’, and (most relevant here) ‘clubs’.<sup>405</sup> Melanie Tebbutt argues through her research on the interwar years that boys’ clubs were an opportunity for some youth workers ‘to rework traditional notions of manliness through a nostalgic and conservative model based on pre-war public school ideals of “traditional” manliness.’<sup>406</sup> She adds that ‘fears of feminisation reflected broader educational and psychological trends’, as ‘anxieties had taken a fresh turn towards the end of the nineteenth century as worries about encouraging incipient homosexuality reinforced concerns to instil gender identity and masculinity.’<sup>407</sup> Also, Emma Latham highlights that gender was a central factor in determining how youth clubs were run in the mid-twentieth century, as their governing bodies shied away from mixed clubs. Boys were encouraged to develop the correct attitude to work and engage in energetic pursuits, while girls were to focus on home-based skills.<sup>408</sup> Finally, Abigail Wills argues that by the 1950s the concept of *mens sana in copore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body) meant that any feminized behaviour in boys was thought to be

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<sup>404</sup> Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrializing society’, p. 330.

<sup>405</sup> Julia Grant, ‘A “Real Boy” and Not a Sissy: Gender, Childhood, and Masculinity, 1890-1940,’ *Journal of Social History*, 37 iv (2004) 829-851, p. 829.

<sup>406</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 19.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>408</sup> Emma Latham, ‘The Liverpool Boys’ Association and the Liverpool Union of Youth Clubs: Youth Organizations and Gender, 1940-70,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35 iii (2000) 423-437, p. 424.

amenable to being combatted by a bout in the boys' club boxing ring, harnessing the physicality of the sportsman in sharp contrast to the languid youth who idles on the street corner.<sup>409</sup>

In addition, even more sedate pursuits such as reading may have served to reinforce gender conformity. Historian Kelly Boyd argues that studying boys' story papers reveals the 'changing ideals and practices which defined attitudes towards masculine behaviour, class relations, the empire, other races and women.'<sup>410</sup> She adds that 'popular fiction was essential in maintaining the gender order in a capitalist economy' and during the interwar period 'although tales did not discourse directly about the nature of manliness, they presented a clear vision of how boys ought to act' and 'conformed more closely to the way publishers wished to construct working-class manliness than the paradigm the youths might have erected for themselves.'<sup>411</sup> Thus, Boyd links manliness to class conformity as she further argues that 'the move to represent the class nature of manliness emanated from a world where class distinctions seemed under threat in the wake of the Great War' as evidenced by the General Strike, universal suffrage and socialism. Therefore, she adds, the stories emphasised traditional sources of manly guidance such as 'fathers, employers and teachers'.<sup>412</sup> Similarly, Chris Tinker in his comparative study of British and French youth culture focusing on magazines states 'popular culture is an important vehicle for the mobilization of masculinities.'<sup>413</sup> He concludes that even in the 1960s both countries maintained 'a largely traditional, heterosexual vision of masculinities, while on occasion allowing the representation of discussion of alternative forms.' Traditional visions included the representation 'of masculinity as active and adventurous.'<sup>414</sup>

As a result, the boys' club was a 'cultural artefact' which reinforced notions of gender conformity. Increasingly, in the first half of the twentieth century, notions of gender were defined by science and psychology by biological differences. Youth organisations prepared boys for the working world and girls for the home. The ideal boy, one who

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<sup>409</sup> Abigail Wills, 'Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England 1950-1970,' *Past & Present*, 187 (2005) 157-185.

<sup>410</sup> Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 10.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 180, 118-9.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid*, p. 119.

<sup>413</sup> Chris Tinker, 'Mixed Masculinities in 1960s British and French Youth Magazines', *The Journal of Popular Culture* 7.1 (2014), p. 84.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid*, p. 101.

indulged in energetic pursuits and possessed a healthy mind and healthy body, became normalised amid fears of ‘incipient homosexuality’ and feminisation. The boys’ club was perceived as the natural environment of the ‘normal’ boy.

These notions are evidenced by NABC publications and by the opinions of Basil Henriques. In the NABC’s annual report for 1930-31, under a section about the appeal of the boys’ club, the author, D.H. Lindsay, argued that it rested upon a boy’s natural desires:

The strength of the Club appeal to the boy lies in its simplicity. It does not strive to bring into his life something which is foreign or unnatural. The healthy boy has a desire for play and adventure and it is good that he should have this desire. Its frustration may cripple him in mind, body and soul, upon the method of satisfaction may depend his future happiness and efficiency.<sup>415</sup>

Within this quote lies the assumption that a normal or ‘healthy boy’ must desire manly ‘play and adventure’ and that a healthy mind is dependent on a healthy body. The use of the word ‘foreign’ here is interesting. It could be establishing the boys’ club as a normal part of the urban working-class landscape, distancing it from the idea of middle-class interference in working-class lives. On the other hand, it could be literal, separating the clubs from the disturbing interwar youth movements burgeoning in foreign countries such as Germany. The article goes on to state that this is how ‘the boy learns by practice the art of citizenship.’<sup>416</sup> Hence, a spirit of adventure, correctly harnessed, leads to becoming a good citizen.

In 1937 in addressing the effect of boys’ clubs on delinquency Henriques defined the causes of delinquency as threefold:

Of the boys who come before the juvenile court between eight and seventeen the causes of their delinquency are probably to be found under one of three headings, either in their psychological make-up, or in their home environment, or in their “spirit of adventure”. In other words, they are either psychopathic; or economic or social; or normal and natural.<sup>417</sup>

Once again, implicit in this statement is that in order for a boy to be ‘normal and natural’ he must have a ‘spirit of adventure’ and such a ‘spirit of adventure’ is an essential prerequisite of masculinity that is free from psychological problems, Henriques continues:

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<sup>415</sup> National Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Fourteen to Eighteen: The Critical Years of Boyhood, Annual Report, 1930-1*, London: National Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1931, p. 4.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>417</sup> Henriques, ‘Boys Clubs in Relation to Delinquency’, p. 203.

The type for which the club is essential, both as a preventive and as a cure for crime, is that of the normal boy who offends in the spirit of adventure and mischief which after all, should be the natural characteristic of healthy adolescent boys if they are to be worth their salt as men.<sup>418</sup>

Although, interestingly, a ‘spirit of adventure’ is appropriate for both boys and men, ‘mischief’ was only suitable for boys.

For Dain harnessing a ‘spirit of adventure’ meant converting ‘negative’ energy into ‘positive’, removing the boys from the undue influence of bad parenting and recreation found in the streets, by encouraging them to participate in ‘manly’ energetic physical sports. In 1926 at the annual conference of the Chief Constables’ Association a correspondent for *The Times* noted the following:

Mr. J. H. DAIN (Chief Constable of Norwich) spoke on the problem of the boys of the country. He said there were too many “half-time” parents willing to appease their boys with a few shillings. There would be no problem if it were tackled in the home. Boys who were members of street gangs were full of potential charm, and he found that their offences arose through their getting rid of latent negative energy, which only required tactful training to turn into positive energy. The disposition to fight or steal might be removed by turning the boy’s mind to manly pursuits. The influence of the street could be counteracted, and the dangerous leisure hour devoted to interests making for efficiency, honesty, and right ideas of social obligations.<sup>419</sup>

Engaging in energetic ‘manly pursuits’ led to ‘efficiency, honesty, and right ideas of social obligations’. In this quote Dain squarely placed the blame upon the parents. The boys on the other hand were ‘full of potential charm’. It is possible that the phrase “half-time” parents’ refers to working mothers, hence their ability ‘to appease their boys with a few shillings’. In this Dain would not be the first or the last person to portray working mothers in a bad light. Consider, for example, a *Daily Mail* article from March 2018 that claimed working mothers were producing mentally ill children.<sup>420</sup> A year earlier Dain himself was described as ‘manly’ by a correspondent of *The Times*, who wrote that ‘during the trying post-war years he has manfully resolved that the education of Norwich working-class boys should not stop at 14.’<sup>421</sup> Thus, additionally, Dain was the ideal provider of manly guidance.

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid, p. 204.

<sup>419</sup> *The Times*, 7 June 1926, p. 16.

<sup>420</sup> ‘Psychotherapist warns that working mothers are producing mentally ill children – and claims the problem is at an “epidemic level”’, *The Daily Mail*, 2 Mar 2018, Daily Mail Online, at <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-5451309/Psychotherapist-warns-working-mothers-produce-mentally-ill-children.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

<sup>421</sup> ‘Prince Henry At Norwich’, *The Times*, 03 Jun 1925, p. 9.



The concept of ‘manliness’ was thus a cornerstone of the police-led boys’ club and manliness was emphasised in the NABC membership pledge upheld by Norwich, Swansea and Hyde which proclaimed:

I promise that, with the help of God, I will endeavour to be honest, straightforward and manly in all my daily life, and that I will do all I can to promote the best interests of the Club.<sup>422</sup>

In a 1957 newspaper article about Swansea Boys’ Club, an image of modern youth culture: ‘young fellows in bright ties and fluorescent socks who appeared to be waiting for the pub doors to be opened’, was contrasted unfavourably with the image of: ‘a procession of canoes...manned by Boys’ Club members who had worked their way down the Thames many in craft of their own make.’<sup>423</sup> These boys had displayed ingenuity in building their own boats as well as the physicality requisite to sail them, which embodied ‘manliness’ in a way that brightly coloured (feminine) ties and socks and the sedentary occupation of drinking in the pub did not.

On one occasion manliness was promoted in the harshest terms at Hull. An article in the *Hull Daily Mail* published on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1950 quotes a Councillor F.L. Bailey who said of the club:

The youth of today requires discipline, and in the Police Boys’ Club he gets it. There is no ‘hanky panky’ – if they don’t behave themselves, they are out on their necks, and that is the sort of treatment the average boy requires today. This namby-pamby stuff is overdone.<sup>424</sup>

It is interesting to postulate what he may have meant by ‘namby-pamby stuff’; integration with girls’ clubs, or simply insufficiently harsh discipline?

The police-led boys’ clubs were totally free of female members for the time period under survey and girls only began to be admitted to the clubs once direct police involvement disappeared in the 1960s, sometimes after many protestations.<sup>425</sup> Swansea, for example, did not admit girls until 1969.<sup>426</sup> However, women were not entirely absent from the clubs. In 1938 at Manchester City Police Lads’ Club:

During the latter part of the winter session the Club had the advantage of the voluntary services of Miss Mari Hilton as Instructress in Fencing and, assisted by some of her advanced pupils, Miss

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<sup>422</sup> Police Welfare Work. 1938. *The Police Review*, 46(2391), pp. 425-426; Barber ‘Straight and True’, p. 1; *The Times*, 6 October, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>423</sup> ‘Swansea Local Education Authority’, *Evening Post* (Swansea), 19 June 1957, page unknown.

<sup>424</sup> ‘No “Hanky Panky” for these Boys’, *The Daily Mail*, 23 November 1950, p. 3.

<sup>425</sup> Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, p. ???

<sup>426</sup> ‘Girls invited to become members of boys’ club’, *Evening Post* (Swansea), 18 February 1969, page unknown.

Hilton coached a class of our senior members on Thursday evenings. Keen interest was shown by the lads concerned, and good progress was made as a result of the efficient and patient efforts of Miss Hilton and her young lady friends... The quick-thinking, keen-eyed lad scores here whilst his perhaps stronger, though less alert comrade is thinking out his plan of attack. This class undoubtedly proved a valuable addition to the club programme.<sup>427</sup>

The role here of young women as instructors is perhaps the exception that proves the rule. However, it is interesting that the 'quick-thinking' and 'keen-eyed' boy was valued over his 'stronger' counterpart as it goes to further emphasise that 'manliness' was linked to self-control and restrained show of physicality as opposed to simple brute strength.

Thus, in the police-led boys' club energetic pursuits aimed to harness the boy's 'spirit of adventure' for positive aims, by reinforcing gender conformity and protecting him from any feminised behaviour, and making him more 'manly'. The notion of 'manliness' was not entirely reliant on physical strength, equally (if not more important) was an emphasis upon skill, making the goal of ideal masculinity theoretically achievable by all boys regardless of size. However on the whole, in the first half of the twentieth century, gender was increasingly delineated and understood in scientific terms. Ideal boys were seen as those who were energetic, manly and enjoyed physical pursuits. Boys' clubs were seen by contemporary commentators as a natural home for such boys and in this they were reinforcing notions of gender conformity as they attempting to create good citizens by, for example, preparing boys for the working world (which is explored in greater depth later in the following section). Police-led clubs did not depart from the example of the boys' club movement as a whole as they also subscribed to traditional notions of gender through the concept of 'manliness'.

### **Police-led clubs and employment**

In order to explore the link between police-led boys' clubs and employment during the period, it is useful to establish what historians have to say about the relationship between masculinity and work and give some context to the unemployment situation in the interwar period before turning to what the NABC had to say about unemployment and then focusing upon how the police-led clubs were preparing their members for the working world. Historians have revealed that to understand the relationship between masculinity and the workplace clearly it is also necessary to consider the importance of

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<sup>427</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, pp. 12-13.

gender, sexuality and class.<sup>428</sup> In the late 1980s Steven Maynard, for example, called for further research to be carried out into the ‘interconnections among gender, masculinity, femininity, sexuality and class both on the job and beyond’.<sup>429</sup> A strong work ethic was also bound up with ideals of normative sexuality, manly independence and active citizenship within the community. Most importantly, however, ideal masculinity was inextricably linked with the ability to work, the mass unemployment of the 1930s threatened this ability, and the clubs identified in this thesis were concentrated in areas of high structural employment. However some economists have argued that boys were not as badly affected by unemployment as their older counterparts.

In his research into bourgeois masculinities up until the First World War, Tosh links normative sexuality to idealised domesticity and a strong work ethic. ‘Deviant’ sexualities such as homosexuality ‘symbolized a rejection of bourgeois masculinity, in seeming to place personal gratification above the demands of work and in undermining the authority of the domestic ideal.’<sup>430</sup> Moreover, he argues, public discourses on manliness revealed it as an essentially secular concept: ‘Its core attributes were physical vigor, energy and resolution, courage and straightforwardness. Its public face was “independence” – the capacity to make one’s own way in the world and to be one’s own master...Probably the most powerful practical consideration reinforcing the work ethic was anxiety about maintaining the means of independence.’<sup>431</sup>

In her investigation into gender and power in Britain, historian Susan Kent, maintains that during the interwar period the majority of women, particularly if they had children, stayed at home rather than went out to work and the ‘bread-winning husband and his stay-at-home-wife continued to characterize working-class ideals of masculinity and femininity, however difficult they were to achieve.’<sup>432</sup> Moreover, ‘work conferred a status on working-class men that no other attribute could replace’, with certain jobs, such as working down the mine, being seen as more manly than others.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Ayers, ‘The Making of Men’, p. 66; Ayers, ‘Work, Culture and Gender’, pp. 153-67; Heron, ‘Boys Will be Boys’, pp. 6-34.

<sup>429</sup> Stephen Maynard, ‘Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History,’ *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (1989) 159-169, p. 169.

<sup>430</sup> Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrializing Society’, p. 338.

<sup>431</sup> Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an Industrializing Society’, p. 335.

<sup>432</sup> Susan Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 299.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid*, p. 302.

In his exploration of masculinity and the popular press during the interwar period, historian Adrian Bingham, has revealed anxieties in the press that unemployment caused a threat to manliness, as it prevented men from 'working hard and functioning as the family breadwinner.'<sup>434</sup> Conservative papers blamed the individual workers, amongst others, for shirking hard work. Young men were represented as wanting to socialise more and work less, or preferred the 'dole' to hard physical work, causing demoralisation and effeminacy. In contrast, socialist outlets argued it was the unfair and inefficient capitalist economy that was to blame for the emasculation of the male worker, as it prevented them from providing for their families. Other commentators, Bingham adds, worried about the psychological damage caused by unemployment, depression, violent outbursts and physical degeneration.<sup>435</sup> Although Bingham's research focuses on men in this context, and boys or young men were not necessarily seen as 'breadwinners', they were still seen as the victims of the psychological and physical degeneracy and resultant emasculation caused by unemployment.

Consequently, men were only considered truly masculine if they could work. Furthermore, entering into the workplace for the first time was an important masculine rite of passage for boys and their masculinity too could have been threatened by lack of work. However, economists Daniel K. Benjamin and Levis A. Kochin in their exploration of unemployment during the interwar period have revealed that unemployment rates among juveniles under 18 years old were far lower than those in other age groups averaging at only five percent (the overall average for all age groups being 14 percent). They argue that the reason for this was that 'juvenile workers were eligible for far less generous employment compensation than were older workers.'<sup>436</sup> In formulating an argument that supports their own particular stance on economic policy they do reveal that the majority of boys who attended the clubs were more likely to be in employment than those a few years older (unemployment for 18-20 year olds was at ten percent and 21-24 around the national average). However, it is equally likely that this age group found employment in low-paid, low-skilled jobs, which they lost when they turned 18, and were

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<sup>434</sup> Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 229.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, pp. 229-233.

<sup>436</sup> Daniel K. Benjamin and Levis A. Kochin, 'What Went Right in Juvenile Unemployment Policy between the Wars: A Comment', *Economic History Review* 32.4 (2008), p. 524.

not replaced by higher-paying traditional jobs. This last point is backed up by Morgan who wrote in his 1943 monograph *Young Citizen* that:

If a lad is employed as a van boy with the prospect of unemployment at eighteen it is wholly bad; but if he may expect after satisfactory service to be taught to drive and eventually to be put on the staff of drivers it is a very different story. So for the page in a club who becomes an adult servant, a messenger boy who goes into the shop as a counter-server. Unfortunately this is a relatively rare occurrence for the simple mathematical reason that many firms employ too much juvenile labour and there are not enough adult vacancies to absorb the lads as they emerge from adolescence.<sup>437</sup>

Therefore, unemployment for boys' aged 18 and above was a genuine concern, which boys' clubs aimed to tackle. An article in the February 1926 edition of *The Boy*, detailed how clubs could help the unemployed boy, by first getting a detailed history from him to ascertain his skills and potential. The author of the article wrote:

When a boy comes to me I find out his age: character of last job: how long he was in each job: why he left it: how many jobs he has had since leaving school: how long he was in each job: which he liked best: what his father does, and what his brothers are doing: if he can use carpenter's tools or the tools of any other trade: if he has any hobbies, such as making wireless sets, or if he is good at drawing.<sup>438</sup>

The ability to use tools, make wireless sets or draw, points again to concerns about finding secure skilled work. The article went on to argue optimistically that even the most unskilled boys could be found employment as they often had learnt skills from a hobby or 'a big, hefty chap' had a 'chance of getting a start' based on their brute strength.<sup>439</sup>

This level of optimism was also to be found in the police-led boys' club. The clubs at Lancaster, Norwich, Swansea and Hull were actively seeking employment for their members, and clubs acted as employment bureaus or referees for local employers. In 1927, the foundation of the Boys' Club of Lancaster was associated with a scheme called the 'Kendal help into work'.<sup>440</sup> No further information has been recovered concerning the 'Kendal help into work' scheme, but the title alone speaks of its purpose. By 1935 the club was running education classes specialising in woodwork similar to those offered by local 'evening institutes'.<sup>441</sup> According to a 1938 article in the *The Police Review* both the Norwich and Swansea clubs were used by potential employers:

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<sup>437</sup> Morgan, *Young Citizen*, p. 24.

<sup>438</sup> Anonymous, 'Helping the Unemployed Boy', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 2.1 (1926), p. 16.

<sup>439</sup> Anon., 'Helping the Unemployed Boy', p. 17.

<sup>440</sup> <http://www.lancasterboysandgirlsclub.org.uk> 17.11.14

<sup>441</sup> 'Education Classes at Boys' Clubs – Lancaster Experiment', *The Lancashire Daily Post*, 14 December 1935, p. 7.

As at Norwich employers of labour are making use of the Club as a sort of employment bureau, and there are good reports regarding the subsequent careers of the Club members.<sup>442</sup>

Unfortunately there are no statistics available that detail the type of employment boys' club members ended up in, or how successful that employment was. In the late 1920s 'employers in the hosiery and boot and shoe trades were complaining of a shortage of boys and girls.'<sup>443</sup> This suggests that the club at Norwich may have been an ideal recruitment ground for boys who could work in these industries. Also Swansea 'served the community well' by producing employable members some of which even went on to higher education, 'one old member' graduated from an 'American university' where he went on to hold 'a position there as careers officer.' Another boy went on to 'Leeds University to study for his degree in physical training to be a master in a secondary school.'<sup>444</sup>

Fitness for work was certainly one of the outcomes that club leaders aimed for. The ability to follow rules and maintain self-control that the physical activities, such as team sports and boxing, demanded could have been used to inculcate a strong work ethic that would have made club members desirable employees. Preparing boys for work was one of the aims at Hull Police Boys' Club. A 1943 article in the Hull *Daily Mail* details a speech made to the boys by a local industrialist Mr R.G. Tarran reporting that:

More boys would be needed to take up trades, and good lads – lads who went to police clubs or evening classes, lads who were anxious to get on in the world – were those who would have special claims for appointments when such came along.<sup>445</sup>

To prepare the boys for work 'a most ambitious curriculum' was created that included 'joinery, motor engineering, gymnastics and dramatic art.'<sup>446</sup> Thus, there was evidence at Hull of providing activities, additional to competitive and team sports, that might have direct application to the working world such as 'joinery' and 'motor engineering'.

Historians have shown that during the period a strong work ethic was bound up with notions of normative sexuality, manly independence and active citizenship within the community and that ideal masculinity was inextricably linked with the ability to work.

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<sup>442</sup> Police Welfare Work. 1938. *The Police Review*, 46(2391), pp. 425-426, p. 426

<sup>443</sup> W.R. Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', *Economic History Review* 30.2 (1977), p. 328.

<sup>444</sup> 'Swansea Local Education Authority', page unknown.

<sup>445</sup> 'Hull Police Boys' Club: Membership an Aid to the Future', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 13 November 1943, p. 4.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

Boys' clubs could provide very real opportunities for work in a period when unemployment and fear of unemployment was at its height, and were optimistic in their ability to do so. Not only did they prepare boys to become manly citizens through a range of energetic activities, they could teach relevant skills and provide direct access into employment. Police-led boys' clubs did not depart from the wider boys' club movement in their aim to provide members with skills that could give them an advantage in the jobs market and direct links with employers.

### **Nation-building and citizenship**

In the final section of this chapter the link between masculinity and physicality and nation-building and citizenship in the police-led club is investigated. The historiography of the interwar and immediate post-war period shows that physicality and nation-building were inextricably linked. This link is also evident in the words of contemporary commentators and the records of police-led clubs. In her exploration of children's playgrounds and parades in early twentieth century America, geographer Elizabeth Gagen, argues that the 'process of nation-building' needed to be understood 'in terms of its physicality.'<sup>447</sup> She adds that physical display carried out by youths through 'movement, coordination, command-response, strength and agility' was taken by reformers as implicit evidence of the 'successful emergence of national principles'. Such physical display is evident in Figures 6 and 7, discussed earlier in this chapter, photographs of gymnastic demonstrations at Norwich and Hyde. She adds that 'self-discipline, endurance, unity, grace and vitality' were viewed as not merely 'by-products of fitness' but intrinsic to the 'very actions'. Moreover, concerns about urban life and the integration of immigrants were assuaged by 'regular physical training' so that 'national characteristics would be embedded in the bodies of America's youth.' Therefore, she concludes, to put children's bodies on display 'fulfilled a double function. It proved national character while at the same time, making it.'<sup>448</sup>

Gagen's argument is persuasive and it could possibly be applied to British children who may have proved their national character through participation in physical activities. According to Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, physical culture between the wars within the

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<sup>447</sup> Elizabeth A. Gagen, 'Making America flesh: physicality and nationhood in early twentieth-century physical education reform', *Cultural Geographies* 11 (2004), p. 437.

<sup>448</sup> Gagen, 'Making America flesh', p. 438.

adult population in Britain, was linked ‘to the promotion of national vigour and imperial power’, although unlike fascist movements on the continent it ‘spurned an identification with militarism and emphasized the importance of voluntary participation as more in tune with national character.’<sup>449</sup> Similarly, with regards to the Second World War period, Sonya Rose has written about British ‘temperate masculinity’ posed against a German ‘hyper-masculinity’.<sup>450</sup> These stances would have also been in keeping with the self-control and restrained masculinity enacted through the discipline of boxing, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

With regards to citizenship, historians Jackson and Bartie, and Wills have investigated its role in the immediate post-war period. Jackson and Bartie state ‘a renewed appeal to “citizenship” as duty had been made at the end of the Second World War, with familiar solutions to “delinquency” being proposed in the form of uniformed youth organisations delivering “muscular Christianity”’.<sup>451</sup> Wills argues the concept of ‘*mens sana in corpore sano*’ was a pre-war construct, based around a belief in free will and the disciplined training of character’, which was still active in the 1950s. It also encompassed the ‘belief that the achievement of manliness depended on the rejection of femininity in all its forms’. She adds such examples of ‘traditionalism’ were ‘not simply a nebulous and ahistorical ‘appeal to old values’”; but also involved a highly specific conception of an organic community and citizenry,’ that sat within the context of reconstruction of the nation.<sup>452</sup> Thus, the concept of a ‘healthy mind in a healthy body’ was thought an important aspect of citizens who would take on the challenge of nation-building, during the interwar period and national reconstruction after the end of the Second World War.

In keeping with this, at the end of the 1930s Morgan, in discussing the main aims of the boys’ club movement, identified ‘fitness’ as being a principle concept in the quest for citizenship, he contended that the boys’ club:

Aims at fitness, and attaches to that word a double triune connotation. Fitness must be physical, mental and moral. Fitness must be for citizenship, for manhood, for work. The whole object of the club is to assist the process of training for fitness, and it is based on the belief that the adolescent

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<sup>449</sup> Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 41.4 (2006), p. 609.

<sup>450</sup> Sonya O. Rose, *Which People’s War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 181.

<sup>451</sup> Jackson with Bartie, *Policing youth*, p. 227.

<sup>452</sup> Wills, ‘Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship’, pp. 157-185.



has emerged from childhood but not attained manhood. He needs guidance. The process of development must originate within and proceed in an environment of guided self-government.<sup>453</sup>

‘Fitness’ was a popular word in the lexicon of contemporary discourse. Morgan was writing at the time of the National Fitness Campaign that aimed to improve the national physique while distancing itself from similar physical culture movements on the continent that had fascistic overtones.<sup>454</sup> As explored in the previous section on health in the police-led clubs, NABC publications linked physical fitness with citizenship and nation-building, and it was a mode of thinking that contemporary commentators approved of. In 1950 sociologist and Methodist minister Bryan H. Reed, in his study of eighty thousand Birmingham adolescents, stressed the role of club leaders in shaping the young people who would in turn shape society, he stated:

We wish that youth leaders, whatever their individual religious or political beliefs, and acting through their own various organizations...could unite in setting before their members the ideal democratic society. The future shape of such a society is by no means pre-determined, but must be worked out by those who are now young.<sup>455</sup>

Consequently, ‘manly’ characteristics such as physical ‘fitness’ and a ‘healthy mind in a healthy body’ were seen as essential by club organisers in producing boys who were capable citizens. There is evidence that this was also the case with police-led clubs.

Russell in his 1932 history of the lads’ club movement was especially impressed by Norwich, vehemently claiming:

It seems to be inculcating a high ideal of citizenship and manhood, and so justifying the belief of the founders that there must be no idea of “uplifting” the boys (what arrogance and impudent assumption of superiority often lies behind such an idea expressed or unexpressed, and damns from the outset the efforts of many a philanthropic undertaking!) but conviction that the moral sense of the boys is naturally and intrinsically good if given an opportunity for healthy growth and expression.<sup>456</sup>

Here Russell seems to be critiquing the improvement of boys through indoctrination and emphasises the importance of appealing to the intrinsic ‘moral sense of the boys’ in order to inculcate ‘a high ideal of citizenship.’ The phrase ‘opportunity for healthy growth and

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<sup>453</sup> A. E. Morgan, *The Needs of Youth. A Report made to King George's Jubilee Trust Fund*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 283.

<sup>454</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska, pp. 596-609.

<sup>455</sup> B. H. Reed, *Eighty Thousand Adolescents: A Study of Young People in the City of Birmingham by the Staff and Students of Westhill Training College for the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950, p. 175.

<sup>456</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, p. 255.

expression' also suggests the means to do this is through physical activity. He goes on to quote Dain on the work of his club in relation to citizenship:

Summing it all up we claim that in all this we are doing a really creative work in citizenship. The work of the Police is often supposed to be limited to the enforcement of the prohibitions of the law and to measures against those who infringe it. But is there any reason why it should not be generally supplemented by the more enduring work of fostering the growth and quality of positive good citizenship?<sup>457</sup>

Thus, the police were presented as not merely reactive but proactive in their shaping of society, by providing manly guidance to their charges. At Manchester not only did they aim to teach their members to be good citizens and upholders of the law:

We see in these new friends of ours not only good citizens of the future but also potential allies in our work of upholding the laws of the country.<sup>458</sup>

They aimed to teach them to be capable of reconstructing civilization:

If the rising generation is to be found fit to shoulder the work of reconstruction which will be largely their concern after the War, they would seem to need much more guidance and training than many of our young people are getting at the present time.<sup>459</sup>

Finally, a short film entitled *The Young Idea* made in 1944 features a dramatized sequence of a Police Constable talking to a boy, who is sat alone in the gutter aimlessly carving a piece of wood, he leads him from the street to the door of the *Police and Citizens' Boys' Club*, (as indicated by a bright neon sign). Inside boys are enjoying different activities such as board games and reading. The following shots involve a montage of gymnastics, physical training and older boys wrestling. One of the longest sequences in the film is a boxing match between two young boys (one is black) refereed by another young boy who is shouting commentary to the crowd. The fact that one of the boxers is black is particularly interesting as it indicates how the example of police-led boys' clubs could be used to explore intersectionality. Finally, an image of cheering boys in the crowd is superimposed over by an older boy flexing his muscles, which then dissolves into him wearing a soldier's uniform. The stills cannot be reproduced in this thesis for copyright reasons. However, when previewing stills it is remarkable how many of them reflect the photographs in the appendix of this thesis, especially the emphasis on physical display through gymnastics and boxing. The location of the club in the film (possibly London) is unclear and there is no sound track, but the images are striking enough to explicitly

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid, p.256.

<sup>458</sup> *Annual Report 1938-1939*, p. 18.

<sup>459</sup> *Annual Report 1940-1941*, p. 8.

underline the link between masculinity and physicality and citizenship and nation-building in that the boy who learns to fight fairly in the club also learns to fight for his country, suggesting that boys' clubs produce good soldiers.<sup>460</sup> Again a direct link is made with militarism, aligning the police-led clubs, like many other boys' clubs, with the militaristic organisations such as the Boys Brigade and Scouts rather than the pacifist woodcraft movements.

Therefore, the police-led clubs of the 1930s and 40s sought to produce young men who would make good citizens capable of building, protecting and rebuilding the nation. They did this through encouraging both physical and moral 'fitness'. In these aims they did not deviate from the mandate set out by the NABC and contemporary social commentators.

## **Conclusion**

There are various facets to the significance of masculinity and physicality in the police-led clubs. Physical pursuits and sporting activities, especially boxing, dominated club schedules and were used to teach self-control and engender boys with self-respect, although boxing was not without its detractors even amongst the police. In offering physical pursuits, police clubs aimed to create good citizens, and divert boys' energies from recreation found on the city streets, where it was possible to fall into crime and anti-social behaviour, to 'friendship' and camaraderie with other club members and the police instructors. Such energies or 'high spirits' were seen as normal and part of the make-up of the 'ideal' boy. If harnessed correctly 'high spirits' were a sign of manliness. In this respect police-led clubs reinforced gender norms of the period. A strong work ethic was also part of the 'manly' boy and police clubs aimed to prepare boys for the working world, even providing them with direct links to employers. Finally, physical fitness in the boy was linked to moral fitness and was seen as an essential aspect of good citizenship and nation-building. The role of masculinity and physicality in the police-led club did not depart particularly from the example of the wider boys' club movement, apart from in the range of activities on offer. Police clubs focused on sports and physical pursuits, whereas the NABC did promote some more sedentary activities, such as handicrafts, as having

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<sup>460</sup> *The Young Idea*. 1944. British Pathe. London; <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/police-boys-club-issue-title-is-the-young-idea>

equally manly outcomes. Many of the implications of masculinity and physicality inside the police-led boys' club can be further explored within the context of the weekend and annual camps they provided, which forms the subject of Chapter Six.

## **Chapter Six: Camping**

### **Introduction**

Some of the themes explored in the previous chapter, such as the importance of physical fitness, friendship between boys and police officers, removing boys from the streets and the training of valuable citizens can be investigated further, alongside some new themes, within the next chapter's focus: the police-led club camp. Camping, both in weekend and summer camps, was an integral part of the programme offered by police-led boys' clubs. It was hailed as a life-changing experience and as a means of escaping urban squalor. This chapter outlines the form police boys' club camps took and addresses a variety of reoccurring themes centred on character-building, the vision behind the camping movement, and the idealisation of nature and camp life. Firstly, it explores the emphasis on games and sports, fresh air and good food, and construction of the camp as a means to building character. Secondly, the ends to which friendship and camaraderie between the boys and police officers was encouraged is investigated. Thirdly, it reveals how the clubs saw the camps as the most useful work they did, removing city boys from the streets to the countryside for pleasure and lasting benefits, such as learning how to become a valuable citizen (and how this may have varied from the boys' motivations for participating in camp life). Finally, it is considered to what extent the camps manifested an idealised view of nature and the countryside as single gender utopian communities which incorporated rural, masculine and survivalist ideals and how lyrical descriptions of camp life in club annual reports may have not reflected the realities of dealing with inclement weather and limited resources.

### **Character-building and friendship**

Character-building and friendship were both important interrelated aspects of the police-led club camp. The former was supplied by healthful outdoor activities and the latter by police officers and other boys. Moreover, boys' friendship with the police officers who organised the camps was in itself seen as character-building. Before considering these points in more detail it is necessary to establish what historians have revealed about the themes of character-building and friendship in relation to youth movements, what form the boys' club camp took, and the significance of character-building and friendship in the boys' club movement as a whole. Historians of the twentieth century have shown that

character-building was an essential aspect of citizenship. Jackson and Bartie have revealed how the rhetoric of character-building was encouraged by the Youth Service which was created by the Ministry of Education Act in 1939. They promoted ‘structured recreation for young people that trained them in “self-government and citizenship” to enable the “building of character” ’through activities that ‘reinforced gender norms, including the sexual division of labour in the family.’<sup>461</sup> These aims were very much in keeping with those of the boys’ clubs’ during the interwar and immediate post-war period. In addition, John Springhall, has written about the character-building aspirations of the boys’ club which aimed to harness the Christian manliness of the public school boy, going back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>462</sup> Thus, the concept of character-building had a long precedent within the club movement and within its historiography.

Although Sian Edward’s recent book entitled *Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside*, does not mention police club camps, it provides a wealth of information relevant to their part within the youth camping movement. She argues how the English countryside was used by youth movements to create the ‘good citizen’ in the period 1930-1960. In her section on camping and the community she illustrates how camp activities aimed to make children into good citizens who would be able to carry out service within their communities and also discusses the significance of friendships forged within a rural setting. She reveals that as camp ‘involved a mixture of camp-craft, such as putting up tents, collecting firewood, starting a fire and cooking’, but also involved games and activities such as swimming, ‘camping worked on a process of service and reward.’<sup>463</sup> She adds that young people were taught ‘responsibility and duty’ by difficult camping tasks and that through these activities they learnt how to be ‘good citizens’ in their community by engaging in ‘self-development’, ‘teamwork’, and ‘friendship with, and acceptance of others.’<sup>464</sup> Finally, Edwards notes that friendships between young town and country dwellers were encouraged by youth organisations in the period as ‘an

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<sup>461</sup> Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 164.

<sup>462</sup> John Springhall, ‘Building character in the British boy: the attempt to extend Christian manliness to working-class adolescents, 1880-1914’, in J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, (eds), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987, pp. 52-72.

<sup>463</sup> Sian Edwards, *Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside: Creating Good Citizens, 1930-1960*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, Loc. 5540 of 7579.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid, Loc. 5554 of 7579.

important tool for the development of citizenship' as they would 'construct their own communities' based on 'shared values and responsibilities.'<sup>465</sup> Thus, according to Edwards, young people could learn to become 'good citizens' and be of use in service to the community by engaging in appropriate camp activities and friendships.

Before looking at what boys' clubs commentators had to say about character-building and friendship within camp, it is useful first to obtain a general idea of the form the boys' club camp took so far as where it was located, who was involved and what sort of activities were on offer. In 1932 a new edition of Charles and Lillian Russell's *Lads' Clubs: Their History Organisation and Management* was published. The original version was published in 1908 by Charles with the assistance of his wife, while the 1932 edition was revised and reissued by her in memory of her husband, who had died nine years earlier.<sup>466</sup> The demand for reissue was perhaps testament to the upsurge of interest in boys' clubs in the interwar period, as Russell was recognised as a pioneer of the movement. Moreover, the book offers a valuable insight into the workings of the typical boys' club camp and the following long quote is worth reading in full as it highlights some important factors:

In all clubs a week's holiday at the seaside or in the country, under canvas, at a farmhouse, or in hutments, is the most important event of the year. There can be no manner of doubt that thousands of lads immured for months in the dingy back streets of a great city, with few opportunities of ever seeing the open country or the sea, such a holiday is of inestimable value. It affords extraordinary advantages – good and plentiful food, vigorous exercise, pure air, sea or river bathing, freedom from all the usual temptations of city life – combined with the companionship of men who have only the highest welfare of the lads at heart. The life in common, amid natural surroundings, does more to promote intimacy and confidence between managers and boys than months of association with the club, and the quasi-parental functions assumed by the former give them opportunities of knowing and being known by their lads with truer insight than under ordinary conditions can ever be possible. For this one week city boys become really boys, and enter into all the enjoyment of a country life with the keenest zest. Moreover, the holiday is as valuable in anticipation and in retrospect as in actuality. It is eagerly looked forward to throughout the whole club season, and it is the anxiety to qualify for camp and to save enough money to pay his share of the expenses that best restrains many a lad, and teaches him self-control.<sup>467</sup>

This quote placed at the beginning of Russell's chapter on camping presents information about typical locations, who was involved, what activities were provided and the overall benefits of camp life. 'Seaside' or 'country' were typical locations for camps. Most importantly, however, it sheds light upon the significance of the camp within club life: its role in character-building, removing boys from the city streets and as an opportunity for

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<sup>465</sup> Ibid, Loc. 5719 of 7579.

<sup>466</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, p. vii.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid, p. 168.

friendship and camaraderie with adult role models. Russell typified camp as the ‘most important event of the year’ one that removed ‘lads’ from ‘dingy back streets.’ Aspects such as good ‘food’, ‘exercise’, ‘pure air’ and ‘bathing’ had moral implications as they provided freedom from temptation. Moreover, the ‘companionship of men who’ had ‘only the highest welfare of the lads at heart’ and who got to know their charges ‘with truer insight than under ordinary conditions’ which could ‘ever be possible’ presented role models to the boys within an informal setting. Thus, ‘city boys’ could become ‘real boys’ (implicit in that phrase, following on from the previous chapter, is the concept of boys possessing natural ‘manly’ qualities in the expression of their physicality). Finally, although the camp was for just ‘one week’ its influence spread throughout the year, not just as an event to look forward to, but as a means to building a boy’s character. This was achieved through teaching the restraint and ‘self-control’ required to save up enough money to attend the camp, and it could have been used as a discipline tool where misbehaviour resulted in not being allowed to attend camp.

Focusing more specifically on the promotion of friendship and camaraderie between boys and camp organisers, it is useful to review W. M. Eagar’s stance on this topic. In his 1953 history of the boys’ club movement, he wrote:

Historically, personal friendship, uncalculating and needing no formulas, has been the effective element in Boys’ Club work. It could not be expressed in rules regulating the relationship of man to boy or boy to boy; but it was inspired and directed by the code which regulated the conduct of the man who gave it.<sup>468</sup>

For Eagar the ‘friendship’ between ‘man’ and ‘boy’ was not subject to rules, but was delineated by an intrinsic moral code held by the men who acted as role models and offered their friendship. The lack of ‘rules’ and ‘formulas’, may sound warning bells to modern ears, as essentially there was no official regulation or monitoring of the relationship between boys and club organisers, which would have left the boys open to abuse in some circumstances.

In fact, during the interwar period camps organised by clubs were seen as an ideal alternative to independent camping by boys because of the opportunity of ‘guidance’ from

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<sup>468</sup> W. M. Eagar, *Making Men: The History of the Boys’ Clubs and Related Movements in Great Britain*, London: University of London Press, 1953, p. 340.



and ‘friendship’ with club leaders. F. Dawes in his reverential 1975 history of the boys’ club movement, cites a club leader ‘who wrote in the summer of 1933’:

The Club idea is not that boys need merely to be given the chance of being together and being themselves, but of being themselves in the atmosphere of a club with the guidance of friendship of leaders. One must feel quite confident that the boys who go off on an independent stunt in the Club’s name are the boys who know and respect the technique of Camping ...too well to bring discredit on themselves and the Club by pigging it or committing serious trespassing or neglecting the elementary rules of health...Moreover there is a very real danger to morals, which must not be exaggerated, but cannot be ignored...important though the encouragement of initiative and enterprise is, it would be disastrous if it were discounted by the contraction of Rheumatic Fever from sleeping out...<sup>469</sup>

Free from any worries about child abuse perpetrated by youth workers, this particular club leader saw moral danger in allowing boys to camp independently, as not only could boys end up trespassing or catch cold in inadequate sleeping arrangements he was subject to ‘a very real danger to morals, which must not be exaggerated, but cannot be ignored.’ Such a euphemistic phrase could mean anything, but in light of the concerns about VD explored in Chapter Three of this thesis, it could have encompassed fears about sexual conquests that could be enjoyed away from home scrutiny. On the other hand, he may have been worried not about the sexual conquest of girls, but about masturbation and sex-play, or even sexual assault between boys.<sup>470</sup> This is reinforced by Russell’s concern, implied in the earlier quote above, over what boys may do when unsupervised. Hence ‘freedom from all the usual temptations of city life’ had to be ‘combined with the companionship of men who have only the highest welfare of the lads at heart.’ Any moral dangers they were subject to were theoretically tempered by the friendship and guidance provided by their benign club leaders. Thus, the boys’ club movement promoted camping as means of building character, health and ‘self-control’, by removing boys from the streets, and allowing them to enjoy good food, fresh air and exercise.

Before exploring how these features and benefits were echoed in the boys’ club camps organised by police officers it is useful first to obtain a clear picture of how the police-led clubs were set up, how they functioned and who was involved. In the summer of 1919, Dain opened a weekend camp at Warren Farm near Gorleston Seaside home. It was located by the sea and consisted of three cottages and a barn that had been previously

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<sup>469</sup> F. Dawes, *A Cry from the Streets. The Boys’ Club Movement in Britain from the 1850s to the Present Day*, Hove: Wayland Publishers, 1975, p. 142.

<sup>470</sup> Alan Hunt, ‘The Great Masturbation Panic and Discourses of Moral Regulation in the Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth Century-Century Britain’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8.4 (1998), pp. 575-615.

requisitioned by the army during the war. The site was prepared by police officers working voluntarily who converted the barn into a dining hall and the cottages into dormitories. The buildings provided accommodation for 24 boys at a time and a Police Constable and his wife who supervised the camp providing the boys with 'wholesome food.' Incidentally, if it was only one police officer and his wife looking after 24 boys it is very likely that the wife was involved in making sure the boys did not misbehave. In 1919, 300 boys visited the farm and the organisers hoped the number would rise to 500 the following year. The camp was financed by a group of 50 annual subscribers. Boys would leave for camp on Saturday afternoon, in cars lent by local firms and returned to Norwich at 9am on Monday morning in time for work.<sup>471</sup>

Some years later, at Manchester City Police Lads' Club, weekend and summer camps were organised throughout its relatively brief existence (1937-1942). The success of their summer camps led them to realise that there was a real need amongst the boys for more camping occasions, and in 1939 a weekend camp was established. They found a site on a farm near Prestbury (in Cheshire, about twenty miles south of Manchester) on the banks of the River Dean, where 'an aggregate of seventy-five lads enjoyed the full week-ends at the camp' from 15<sup>th</sup> July to the 26<sup>th</sup> August 'when the outbreak of War made it necessary for (them) to pack up for the winter.' They hoped for a permanent arrangement concluding that: 'The camp has undoubtedly been of great benefit to the lads, and has come to stay.'<sup>472</sup> Camp activities were mainly physical in nature: 'time in camp was largely spent in games and swimming.', but 'there was the wireless and reading matter for the less-strenuous moments.'<sup>473</sup> The weekend camp continued for the life of the club, and even in its final year, 1942, the weekend camp ran from early May to September.<sup>474</sup>

Swansea's 1938 annual report provides a detailed snapshot of camp life, during their 'fifth Annual Summer Camp' which was held 'at St. Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan' in the summer of that year. '110 members and 6 leaders' attended the camp which boasted 'one of the largest civilian gymnasia in the country' and access to 'excellent swimming' facilities and large fields for cricket and football. During the day 'camp games and

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<sup>471</sup> Robert Walker, *Seventy Years Young*, 1990, p. 8; 'Police and Juveniles: Fine Effort at Norwich', *The Police Review*, 28 May 1920, p.255.

<sup>472</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 15.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>474</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club*, Manchester: Warburton & Sons, 1942, p. 5.

activities were organised until lunchtime' with 'swimming...and long walks over the beautiful countryside and coast' in the afternoon, and 'a concert and a sing-song' in the evening.<sup>475</sup>

Camps were usually organised and staffed by Police Constables or Sergeants, with higher ranking officers usually only making brief visits for inspections as already described in Hull. This is in evidence at Swansea Boys' Club, where in 1938, Sergeant E. Honbrook is listed in their annual report as camp secretary.<sup>476</sup> At Manchester City Police Lads' Club's weekend camp, Sergeants R. Derbyshire and T.P. Smith and P.C's T. Doody (whose involvement in the club was explored at length in Chapter Three) and J. Greenhalgh' were jointly 'responsible for the establishment and running of the camp.' The officers and boys worked together: 'Officers did the catering, and the lads assisted with the cooking, etc.'<sup>477</sup> Similarly, a newspaper article detailing Hull City Police Boys' Club camp at Hornsea in the summer of 1950, notes the camp was run for 50 boys by 'Pc.'s T. Skelton, secretary, and L. Harvey, treasurer, who are in charge, and the five or six other policemen and their wives who help to run the camp,' including PC Barker who acted as cook, and all of whom were doing a 'grand job'.<sup>478</sup>

Therefore, the police-led club camps provided facilities for many boys as numbers were often in the treble figures sometimes even in the hundreds in the case of Norwich. There were plenty of opportunities for the boys to enjoy fresh air and exercise, popular activities included games, outdoor swimming and rambling, such pursuits would have not been available to the same degree during regular club meetings, in this respect camp life also offered a break from the routine.

The activities on offer and the maintenance of camp itself also provided opportunities for character-building exercises. In the Hull *Daily Mail* on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August, page four featured a photograph of the 'police club boys in camp', and depicted Mr H. Jaram Assistant Chief Constable having 'a friendly word with lads of Hull City Police Boys' Club' during a tour of the camp; the paper concluded that he found 'the boys well and

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<sup>475</sup> Swansea Boys' Club, *The Work Goes On!*, p. 9.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>477</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 15.

<sup>478</sup> 'Pc. Barker Takes Over the Cookhouse', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 3 August 1950, p. 5.

happy.<sup>479</sup> An article on the front page of the paper the day before describes the visit in more detail. Thirty boys attended the St. John Ambulance camp at Hornsea, 'under the supervision of Insp. A. E. Baker, cadet superintendent, assisted by other members of Hull City Police, club officials and women helpers.'<sup>480</sup> The boys prepared the camp for inspection:

The youngsters are all fit and enjoying themselves. This morning they spent their time making camp spick and span for the inspection, and Mr Jaram, accompanied by Supt. Green, Supt. Cook, and Mr Harold Leslie Bourne, secretary of the boys' club, made a complete tour of the camp.<sup>481</sup>

Such preparations could have been perceived as a character-building exercise for the boys who were taking responsibility for their surroundings.

The character-building aspects of camping were highlighted explicitly in Manchester City Police Lads' Club annual report for 1940-41. Despite the war and the threat of air raids they claimed 'the vital importance of character-building in our boys' was 'not being neglected' and added:

Let it be said that certain of the Club officers spend a considerable amount of spare time in companionship with the boys in the Club; travelling with them to their sports matches; and above all at the Club Weekend Camp throughout the Summer. The influence which those contacts have on the building of character are immeasurable. We are, however, satisfied that the effect of the personal example on the boys is considerable and it may be that the influence for good one may have on a group of boys in the course of, for instance, a weekend's adventure in camp, is greater and likely to be more lasting than that which would result from weeks of spoken word.<sup>482</sup>

Thus, character-building at Manchester was engendered by the 'companionship' between boys and officers. Also the actual construction of the weekend camp provided a character-building exercise where officers and older boys worked together in harmony:

Steps were taken immediately to establish the camp, and on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1939, three officers and eleven of the senior lads bore down on the site in two motor lorries laden with materials for an 18ft. by 8ft. two-roomed wooden hut, three tents, cooking utensils, stoves and food, etc. All hands got to work, and the Sunday evening saw camp well established. Following that week-end, necessary items were added to the equipment, and very soon there was accommodation for sixteen lads at the camp for sleeping, and feed arrangements for up to twenty-four.<sup>483</sup>

There is an innate masculinity in the phrase 'bore down on the site', it conveys the strength and physical activity involved in constructing the camp and the logistics of

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<sup>479</sup> 'Police Club Boys in Camp', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 7 August 1947, p. 4.

<sup>480</sup> 'Police Club Boys' Camp Inspection', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 6 August 1947, p. 1.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>482</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, p. 5.

<sup>483</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 15.

moving all the equipment required. It could be argued that the construction of the camp was a character-building exercise that through interaction with police officers as role models theoretically made the boys manly and enabled them to invest their strength into the establishment of their own surroundings.

Manchester's second annual camp was held in 1939, 'during the whole of Whit-week on the shore of Lake Windermere.' Five police officers supervised a camp of 39 boys. A quote from the club's annual report for 1938-39 details the activities enjoyed and the interaction between the boys and officers:

The days passed far too quickly, crowded as they were with games, swimming, rambling, climbing, and all the fun of Camp. Sergeants T.P. Smith and G. Carpenter, and P.C.'s T. Doody, J. Greenhalgh and W.J. Hanson, all spent the week under canvas and shared the responsibilities. The friendship developed in Camp between Officers and lads means much to the Club, setting the seal on one year's work and providing a strong foundation on which to build the next.<sup>484</sup>

The activities listed above were informal in nature and would have served to encourage 'friendship' between the boys and officers. Moreover, spending a week living together 'under canvas' in an unfamiliar environment would have deepened the bond between them, reaffirming relationships built up over the year, at the club, and guaranteeing their continuance into the following year. It is interesting to speculate what exactly they meant by 'friendship'. As some of the officers may not have been that much older than the older boys attending camp, 'friendship' may have meant the influence of an older brother, or simply the companionship of young energetic men enjoying the outdoors. However, once again, it is important that such unregulated 'friendship' could have been open to abuse.

Thus, the experience of the police-led boys' club camp was very much in keeping with that promoted by the wider boys' club movement. Camping enabled members of police boys' clubs to build their characters, through a range of energetic outdoor activities and the set up and maintenance of the camp itself. 'Friendship' was encouraged, by club organisers, between boys and men with the idea that boys could build their characters further by emulating their police officer role models, although at this point in history there were no official guidelines laid down on how to do this appropriately.

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<sup>484</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

## Vision

Many clubs in the boys' club movement, including those led by police officers saw the camps as the most useful work they did. The vision behind the organisation of camps was to remove city boys from the streets to the countryside, not just for their pleasure, but to instil lasting benefits, particularly by being given the opportunity to become a good citizen. This was in keeping with the vision behind the clubs in general. As outlined in chapter one, creating good citizens was central to the vision behind police-led clubs as well as the boys' club movement as a whole. Moreover, the police conformed with the wider boys' club movement in linking citizenship with nation-building, physical fitness and manliness. In these respects, the club camp could be seen as a microcosm of the club itself.

Sian Edwards argues that the concept of the 'good citizen', key to the vision behind the organised youth camp of the period 'was shaped by contemporary understandings of class, gender and, significantly, socio-geographical understandings of the nation,' and 'was constructed against the urban "other", young people who spent their leisure hours on the streets, falling into delinquent ways.' She adds that the 'dichotomy' of the 'good citizen verses the "problem" juvenile delinquent, constructed by youth movements in the mid-century,' demonstrates there was 'significant continuity in class-based approaches to youth at this time, with delinquent behaviour being almost explicitly treated as a by-product of working-class urban living.'<sup>485</sup> Finally, Edwards states that while 'on the one hand the countryside was a space utilized by youth organisations in their citizenship training...on the other it was a space of relative freedom for unsupervised adolescents.'<sup>486</sup>

Taking this point into consideration it is important to note that the vision of camp organisers, probably digressed from that of the boys participating in the annual and weekend camps. In her book *Being Boys*, Melanie Tebbutt offers a unique insight into camp life from the adolescent's perspective through the diaries of her father Les, who was a teenager and a member of the Boys Brigade in the late 1930s.<sup>487</sup> Tebbutt reveals that camping was a way for her father to build his confidence and his experience involved creeping out of camp after curfew, 'messaging about', attempting to 'get off' with girls and

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<sup>485</sup> Edwards, *Youth Movements*, Loc. 6533-6645 of 7579.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid, Loc. 175 of 7579.

<sup>487</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, 2012, pp. 74-78.

visiting the local fun fair. She adds ‘the well-known “liminal” delights of being away from home and at the seaside helped to disrupt and subvert the BB’s expectations of disciplined behaviour.’<sup>488</sup> Tebbutt states quite rightly that ‘given that surviving accounts usually express the viewpoint of camp organisers’ her father’s diaries ‘offer a valuable alternative view to these more usual ones.’<sup>489</sup> Unfortunately, as far as can be ascertained, no first-hand accounts of camping with police-led boys’ clubs survive from the boys’ perspectives, and it underlines the limitations that the historian faces. Although it is easy enough to investigate the motivations behind the visions the club organisers had for the camps, it is far more difficult to ascertain the success of such visions which were inevitably played out against the boys’ individual concerns that may have included rites of passage engaged in beyond the adult gaze.

Camping was seen as of central importance in the boys’ club movement. A contributor to the NABC’s journal in 1928, a Captain H.W. Kimberley, commented that ‘the sure and certain way to success in a Club is to allow no stone to rest unturned to ensure the Annual Camp being as much a certainty as the football or cricket team.’<sup>490</sup> Hubert Llewellyn Smith in his 1935 survey of London life and labour wrote: ‘Camp is the most important activity of the year and some clubs possess regular camping-sites and are able to do much week-end camping as well.’<sup>491</sup> During the same year, in the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys’ Clubs (LCABC) annual report for 1935-36, a photograph showing a large group of boys sitting on rocks by a waterfall is captioned: ‘Camps and Hiking play a part in this work of building a Nation of Healthy Manhood’.<sup>492</sup> The phrase ‘building a Nation of Healthy Manhood’ is a fascinating one, because it reveals the main motivations behind club camps in just a few words. The words ‘building...Healthy Manhood’ suggests the character-building qualities of club camps, as explored in the previous section, alongside the heteronormative idea of manliness explored in the previous chapter. In addition to this, the words ‘building a Nation’ imply the desire to produce boys that are ideal citizens, who are themselves nation builders. A year later the LCABC reported:

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<sup>488</sup> Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 75.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid, pp. 77-78.

<sup>490</sup> H.W. Kimberley, ‘Camp!’, *The Boy: A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of the Boy* 1.4 (1928), p. 5.

<sup>491</sup> Llewellyn Smith, *The New survey of London Life and Labour*, p. 158.

<sup>492</sup> Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Our Responsibility, Annual Report, 1935-1936*, Lancaster: Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1936, p. 2.

‘Boys from more clubs than ever before spent their summer holidays and week-ends in camp.’ They added:

Year by year thousands of boys from all over the country are finding in the enjoyment of their camps that spirit of friendship and loyalty upon which our movement is founded. To the majority of these boys working in factories and in towns much of the beauty of the country is unknown, but every year more boys are seeking healthy recreation in cycling, hiking, nature study, and sketching, and many other country pursuits. Our Association must see that this great opportunity is not denied them.<sup>493</sup>

This outlines the motivations behind providing camping opportunities for boys’ club members. Again the opportunity for friendship (with other boys and the camp organisers) is included alongside removing boys from ‘factories’ and ‘towns’ to ‘the beauty of the country’. Likewise, they had the opportunity to enjoy activities that they would not necessarily experience at home such as ‘cycling, hiking, nature study, and sketching.’

Thus, the provision of camps by boys’ clubs was seen as central to their mission, a way to produce healthy manly citizens, while providing an annual holiday with a range of entertaining activities. Indeed for many boys it was their only opportunity for a holiday. These aspects are also encountered when considering the experience of the police-led boys’ club camp. Camp was ‘the most beneficial and indeed popular’ of the summer activities offered at Manchester City Police Lads’ Club.<sup>494</sup> Moreover, the meeting minutes for the club chart the development and thinking behind their annual and weekend camps. The club opened on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1937 and already by the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month the club’s committee indicated in their meeting minutes that ‘the idea of arranging a Camp for the boys next Summer was discussed at length, and it was agreed that the suggestion was an attractive one, though necessarily involving a considerable amount of work and attention to detail.’<sup>495</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1938 the YMCA camp at Windermere was selected as the venue for their summer camp and a letter was sent out to parents (giving them ample time to save up?). ‘It was mentioned that P.C.’s Doody and Greenhalgh had volunteered to use part of their Annual Leave in order to accompany the lads to Camp.’<sup>496</sup> The accommodation was reserved and the deposit paid by the end of the month. It was reported on 1<sup>st</sup> March that ‘contributions were coming in satisfactorily from the members’

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<sup>493</sup> Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys’ Clubs, *Annual Report 1936-1937*, Lancaster: Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Boys’ Clubs, 1937, p. 12.

<sup>494</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, p. 7.

<sup>495</sup> Doody, *Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Meeting Minutes*, p. 8.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.



and the date for the camp sports day was fixed, which would be attended by the Division.<sup>497</sup> The following year, on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1939, those attending the meeting were deciding on the location of their Whit-week camp:

The decision of the Committee rested between the Seaside Holiday Camp at Llandulas and the Y.M.C.A. Camp at Windermere. The opinion was that the counter attractions surrounding the former Camp might interfere with the smooth running of the Camp, and it was eventually agreed that this year's Camp be held at Windermere.<sup>498</sup>

Returning for a moment to the experience of Tebbutt's father as a member of the Boys' Brigade, the decision to camp in Windermere instead of the Seaside Holiday Camp at Llandulas, was made to avoid the 'counter attractions surrounding' the latter camp. It is not unreasonable to speculate that these attractions may have included the 'liminal delights' of visits to fun fairs and looking for girls and that the boys at the police club in Manchester were just as keen to subvert camp rules as their boys' brigade counterparts and enjoy 'the very real danger to morals' mentioned by Dawes' 1930s club leader.

Although the camp during Whit-week in 1939 caused a deficit of £7 7s and 1 ½ d, it was concluded that 'the Camp had been a great success in every way, and had been greatly enjoyed by all taking part' and the money owing was 'made up from the general funds.'<sup>499</sup> By 1940 the idea of an annual camp was abandoned although the weekend camp was still attended by 'small parties of Club members...on Sunday each week', as the war made the practicalities impossible due to 'Government restrictions on the use of tents' and 'general uncertainty as to the position of Club officers in regard to possible requirements of duty.' Club organisers worried however that cancelling the annual camp would result in no annual holiday for some members and therefore offered alternative arrangements, albeit without police involvement, at the 'Seven Springs Camp, Disley, an established camp of which good reports had been received,' where 'a provisional booking had been made with this Camp authority for thirty places at Camp for August Bank holiday week.'<sup>500</sup>

At Hull City Police Lads' Club the boys enjoyed 'a week's holiday in the St. John Ambulance camp each year, and for many of them it (was) their only opportunity of a

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>499</sup> Doody, *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes*, p. 69.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid, pp. 75-76.

holiday at the seaside.’<sup>501</sup> Once again for some members the club’s annual camping holiday offered their only opportunity for a summer holiday and it goes some way to shedding light upon the boys’ motivation for joining such clubs. The police club vision may have been to produce ideal citizens through the medium of camp life, whereas the vision of the boys may have simply to find a holiday wherever they could, perhaps encouraged by parents who may have relished getting them out of the house for a week.

Finally, a 1944 article about one of the Hull clubs reveals how the Second World War provided an opportunity for boys to participate in another sort of camp, it reported:

When Chief Constable T. Wells went to the Boulevard (Hull) Police Boys’ Club last night to appeal for harvest helpers, 14 years old and upwards, every lad present volunteered. Mr Wells told the boys that he would gladly give up a week’s holiday to spend it with them at their Patrington camp to see that they had a good time. Many of the 400 Hull policemen who went harvesting a year ago were now in the Services and in the national interest everyone should help to carry on good work in the harvest fields.<sup>502</sup>

Accommodation was provided for the boys at the harvest camp and they were paid nine pence per hour ‘the rate for unskilled labour’ although ‘those doing certain types of work’ got ‘paid more.’<sup>503</sup> There are several factors at play here. Although the camp at Patrington was certainly not a recreational one it still involved city boys engaging with the countryside, in the ‘national interest’ aping their police officer role models and becoming good citizens by delivering an essential service to the community.

Thus, the vision and motivations behind providing police-led club camps was to give the boys the chance to enjoy healthy recreation away from the city streets and enable them to become good citizens. Like the wider boys’ club movement, the police saw the provision of camps as central to their agenda, a way to produce healthy manly citizens, while providing an annual holiday with a range of activities including recreational entertainment and camping chores. However, the vision of the club organisers may not have been in keeping with that of the boys, who, relying on the clubs for their only annual holiday may have also been quite capable of subverting club rules for their own agendas.

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<sup>501</sup> *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 3 August 1950, p. 5.

<sup>502</sup> ‘Police Boys’ Club Harvesters’, *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 12 June 1944, p. 3.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

## **The role of nature**

In order to investigate to what extent police-led club camps manifested an idealised view of nature as single gender utopian communities, and to consider how lyrical reports of camp life may not have reflected the realities of dealing with inclement weather and limited resources, it is useful to focus on some reoccurring themes such as citizenship, and masculinity, before turning to contemporary accounts of boys' club and police-led boys' club camps. The historiographical context of research into boys' clubs, camping, and their relationship to nature reveals themes of citizenship, manliness, masculine identity and anti-militarism. Sian Edwards argues that during the period 'the image of the English countryside, became increasingly central to meanings of Englishness and understandings of both national identity and citizenship' and accordingly youth movements put the English countryside at the centre of their citizenship training. She adds that the countryside became a 'symbol of the future with moral, limber, hardworking and self-sacrificing members of youth movements being celebrated as such' and ultimately to be a 'good citizen' young people had to develop 'a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with the rural sphere.'<sup>504</sup>

Kenny Cupers links the vision behind youth camping movements to the role of nature. In his analysis of the youth camp movements in both Germany and the United States he argues that: 'throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, national youth movements of different ideological stripe developed the youth camp as their central pursuit' and that 'national youth movements became concretely attracted to experiences of nature' by carefully constructing the environment of the camp and thus the cultural interpretation of nature through 'the social practices of the youth camp came to figure as practices of conduct and control.' He adds that 'youth movements in various Western nation-states during this time were tied to ideologies of nationhood, coinciding with the gradual extension of national citizenship to the young individual'. Moreover, he argues, the 'natural environment' translated 'these ideologies into social experience' and 'the camps developed by these movements functioned both as spaces of freedom...and spaces of formation, normalization and disciplining – to create well-functioning citizens or national(ist) subjects.' Despite the vast differences between the ideologies and vision of

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<sup>504</sup> Edwards, *Youth Movements*, Loc. 6544, 6594, 6816 of 7579.

the respective youth camp movements in 1930s US and Germany, for example the aim in the US was ‘to educate children to become autonomous and self-controlling individuals in a liberal society’, while Germany ‘aimed at the formation of disciplined racist subjects prepared for warfare’, there were similarities. Cupers reveals that: ‘both movements brought youth into contact with nature, both deployed the natural environment to advance political and societal goals, and in doing so, both aimed at reproducing youth as governable subjects, amenable to the ideology and success of the nation state.’<sup>505</sup>

Although the work of architectural historian W. Barksdale Maynard focuses upon camping in the latter decades of the nineteenth century America, his findings still present some fascinating insights. In exploring the ‘social meaning of boys’ camping’, Maynard argues that ‘the rise of “the outdoor movement”’ led to the association of nature with ‘virility’ and ‘masculinity’, as the antidote to ‘the artificiality and effeteness of late nineteenth century urban life.’ He adds that the main ‘societal goal’, an example of the attempt by adults to begin to standardise youth culture, was to create the ‘ideal boy’, a figure who would be ‘a desirable intermediate between the “tough” and the “sissy”.’ Indeed, ‘camps and their architecture were part of this standardization, a synthesis of the back-to-nature and camping enthusiasms with new ideas about the special needs of young people.’ Moreover, he continues, there was a ‘a high sense of moral purpose’ behind the formation of the American summer camps, for they were seen as an antidote to the corruption caused by ‘city life’ and ‘idleness’.<sup>506</sup> His latter point correlates directly with the boys’ club and police-led boys’ club aim to remove boys from the street in order to transform them into manly citizens.

Tebbutt’s work on wild landscapes and manly identity argues that hiking through wild tracts of land that could be reached easily from home could create a sense of ‘local patriotism’. Hiking, due to its ‘self-discipline and athleticism’ could also provide a viable masculine alternative activity to the more ‘aggressive physicality of some working-class culture’, which was not just character-building, but an outlet for ‘emotional release’ (due to the romantic contrast between bleak, awe-inspiring moorland and the industrial cities

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<sup>505</sup> Kenny Cupers, ‘Governing through nature: camps and youth movements in interwar Germany and the United States’, *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008), p. 195.

<sup>506</sup> W. Barksdale Maynard, ‘“An Ideal Life in the Woods for the Boys”: Architecture and Culture in the Earliest Summer Camps’, *Winterthur Portfolio* 34.1 (1999), pp. 16-17.

below), that could not be obtained through other sporting activities.<sup>507</sup> Hiking was a very popular activity at boys' club camps. The weekend camp at Manchester was within a bike ride's distance from the city centre and may have provided such an emotional contrast between moorland and city.

Finally, in his study of militarism in British youth movements, John Springhall argues that while during the Edwardian period 'military men like Baden-Powell were to profit from a climate of opinion favourable to any movements for boys, in the 1920's waves of virulent pacifism and anti-militarism moved public opinion against the idea of ex-soldiers training the young.'<sup>508</sup> Indeed, it also led to the formation of anti-militarist youth movements such as Kibbo Kift and the Co-op's Woodcraft Folk. Interwar boys' club camps with their emphasis on nature and opportunities to hike across the countryside and swim in the sea could have also been seen as anti-militarist. As Kupers demonstrates above, camping could be a vehicle for a range of different ideologies, including militarist and anti-militarist ones. Therefore, the same sort of masculinity was harnessed in the propagation of varying ideologies.

Thus, historians have revealed that engaging with the natural world through camping was a way in which citizenship could be taught to young people and national identity reinforced or challenged. In some cases it was a means to advance social and political ideologies, or reinforce gender norms. On the other hand, there was room for less aggressive understandings of masculinity, which could even be anti-militaristic in tone.

Camp life appeared to idealise nature. Surviving descriptions of boys' club camps including those led by the police, often had a lyrical quality, and mostly presented a single gender utopian community where rural, masculine, and survivalist ideals were played out. Kimberley in his article about camping written for *The Boy*, waxed lyrical about the 'great opportunity' camping could provide for the boy:

Boys whom one has thought had no appreciation of the less mundane things of life will suddenly burst forth into the most poetic mood on coming across some beauty spot in the evening ramble, or seeing a particularly beautiful sunset. The boy who has seemed the hardest nut of all to crack

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<sup>507</sup> Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Dark Peak, 1880s-1920s', *Historical Journal* 49.4 (2006), pp. 1152-1153.

<sup>508</sup> John Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements, 1908-30', *International Review of Social History* 16 (1971), pp. 121-158.

will spring the most amazing surprise by rushing off to pick armfuls of flowers for the chapel altar.<sup>509</sup>

Here Kimberly indicates the romance and emotion associated with nature. Returning to Tebbutt's point about an alternative to 'aggressive physicality', camp life could be an outlet for a more subtle form of masculinity triggered by engagement with the natural world. Kimberley concludes that the club camp brought boys 'closer to God, to nature, to one another and to their Club Leader.'<sup>510</sup> Here, displays of love for beauty are seen as legitimate when enacted within a Christian context. Although the role of religion is downplayed in the literature relating to police-led clubs, nature and comradeship (both amongst the boys and with the police officers leading the camps) were elements strongly in evidence.

There is proof that police club camps also idealised nature. The unadulterated happiness of being outdoors in the countryside was presented in Swansea's annual report from 1938:

It was indeed a happy feature to see leaders and boys rambling along by-paths and lanes, singing, laughing and talking together all the way. It is impossible to believe in the happiness of Camp in this manner, unless it has been experienced...<sup>511</sup>

At Manchester City Police Lads' Club the description of camp life in their annual report for 1940-41 provides such a breathless vision of a rural idyll that it is worth quoting at length:

Picture in the mind's eye a group of boys, ages ranging from 14 to 18 years, reaching Camp by cycle about 3 p.m. on a Saturday, after a comfortable hour's ride from Manchester. Immediately, they shed all clothing and don bathing slips, and, with nothing more than this to impede free movement, they wander, run, and jump through fields; go in and out of the river at will, climb trees; play field games; sing and shout until they are hoarse; and through it all feel the fresh air and sunshine playing on their bodies. Their appreciation and respect for the beauties of nature are obvious. When tired at long last, after hours of romping and sprawling to their heart's content, interrupted only by breaks for meals, they turn-in about 10-30 to 11 p.m., ostensibly to sleep. But often, by the time the last boots have been heaved across the tents and the last discussion has been concluded, it is rather later than this. The beneficial effect on our City boys of these week-ends in the country are obvious, and the officers responsible for running the Camp feel amply repaid for their efforts in the knowledge that it brings so much pleasure and lasting benefit to the Club members.<sup>512</sup>

The above quote emphasises the freedom available to the boys. No formal activities are mentioned, which is in stark contrast to militarism popular in youth movements prior to the First World War (as highlighted by Springhall). In the celebration of nature and the

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<sup>509</sup> H.W. Kimberley, 'Camp!', *The Boy: A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of the Boy* 1.4 (1928), p. 5.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>511</sup> Swansea Boys' Club, *The Work Goes On!*, p. 9.

<sup>512</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, pp. 7-8.

informality of the camp schedule there is perhaps an implied connection between the ‘free movement’ of the ‘beauties of nature’ found in the ‘fields’, ‘river’ and ‘fresh air and sunshine’, wholly unchecked by man, and the ‘free movement’ of the boys who are returned to an innocent, almost pagan, symbiosis with their natural environment, as they strip off to fully immerse themselves in the natural world. Finally, the ‘lasting benefits’ of camp life to club members acknowledged in the quote emphasises the transformative aspects of their encounter with nature.

‘Lasting benefits’ could also refer to the pleasant memories of rural life that the boys took home with them. The camp at Manchester was considered important enough to record for posterity. *The Reporter* a local Manchester paper included an article on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 1939 about the Lord Mayor’s visit to the lads’ club. As part of his visit he was treated to ‘a cinematograph display’ of the club’s summer camp. ‘This was a film taken by Mr Fred Dawes about 300 ft. in length, of the Police lads’ Club camp during the summer at Windermere. The film was beautifully coloured, and the lads were delighted to see themselves on the films.’<sup>513</sup> The Mayor’s visit to the club was brief, but it is significant that the camp film was considered important enough to show him alongside a physical training display before he left.<sup>514</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, physical training and gymnastics were important in displaying the ‘ideal’ youthful body. Moreover, the camp film displayed the boys in the ‘ideal’ environment. Finally, the film would have been an opportunity for the boys to recall any pleasurable memories.

Although there is no mention of any women in the above quotes there is evidence that police-led boys’ clubs and camps were far from single-gender utopias. One article published in the February edition of *The Boy*, in 1928, called for more women in boys’ clubs and more female club leaders. The author, Katharine C. Dewar, who had been a boys’ club leader for five years working with boys and young men aged from 14 to over 21, argued that women had certain advantages over men. Women were ‘far more patient with the boys, and, on the whole, more hopeful of their power to improve than men workers’, had higher expectations of the boys, and were less likely to demotivate the boys by ‘over-correcting’ them. Moreover, regarding club holidays, she remonstrated against

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<sup>513</sup> Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Press Cuttings, p. 11.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

holiday homes for boys, or for girls, that stipulated that no acquaintances of the opposite sex must be made, adding: 'this on a holiday when one is feeling really amicable with all the world!', further arguing that such rules were guilty of viewing women or men en masse rather than as individuals.<sup>515</sup> Evidently, women did sometimes play a key role in the boys' club and boys' club camp.

Women were never leaders at police-led clubs and camps, but they were involved. As Figure 10 in the Appendix shows, women actively fund-raised for Hyde Lads' Club during the interwar period. When the Hull club held its 'first inter-club boxing tournament' women were present in the capacity of canteen helpers including the wife and daughter of one of the police Superintendents.<sup>516</sup> Finally as noted above, Mari Hilton aided by her 'young lady friends' was a fencing 'instructress' at Manchester.<sup>517</sup> With regards to women helping out in police club camps, Dain's weekend camp that opened in 1919 was supervised by a policeman and his wife, and there were 'women helpers' and policemen's wives at the Hull camps. Surviving documentation does not reveal the exact roles of female helpers, taking club life as an example it is highly likely that police wives were expected to assist with the catering. For example, in the meeting minutes for Manchester City Police Lads' Club it is recorded that: 'the wives of the members of the Committee' were 'asked to assist with general preparation for the Tea' on the day of their Christmas party in 1937.<sup>518</sup> Their presence also may well have been a necessity when male volunteers were in short supply. Presumably in Dain's weekend camp, as there was only the Police Constable and his wife, she would have participated in a variety of tasks. Moreover, it is possible that female presence at the clubs, or indeed the camps, may have been left unrecorded as it may not have been considered important enough to mention.

Consequently, the police club camp may have included a female presence. However, the extent to which this challenged the notion of a single-sex utopia, would have been dependent upon how traditional the roles were which the women played. Another challenge to the utopian vision of the club camp was the reliability of the weather. The

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<sup>515</sup> Katharine C. Dewar, 'The Place of Women in Boys' Clubs,' *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 1.3 (1928), pp. 5-7.

<sup>516</sup> 'Police Boys' Club Boxing: East Hull Wins Championship', *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 29 January 1944, p. 4.

<sup>517</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>518</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Meeting Minutes*, 'Minutes of Meeting of Committee of Management Held Mill Street Station, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1937, p. 2.



annual report for 1938-39 in Manchester emphasised the beauty of the weather. At their summer camp in 1939 they ‘experienced what seemed the most perfect camping weather ever, with brilliant sunny days and bright moonlight nights the whole of the week. We shall never forget the beauty of the moonlight on the lake with the trees silhouetted against a clear sky.’<sup>519</sup> One has to wonder if this was an exception that proved the rule. Given the famed inclemency of British weather especially in the north of the nation, where many of the police-led boys’ clubs were situated, it is hard not to assume that bad weather and lack of resources occasionally challenged the rural idyll. One approach was to remain optimistic, in A.H. Norris’ preface to Lillian and Charles Russell’s 1932 history of the lads’ club movement he wrote:

Russell was perhaps at his best in the lads’ club camp: were it fine or wet it was a week of activity, the lads in the latter case always accepting the optimistic statement that the rain was clearing off, and continuing to pass the time with singing songs, mouth organ, or similar contests under his chairmanship.<sup>520</sup>

In the same book, the chapter on camp life provides a lot of practical information that hints at what can go wrong if the possibility of bad weather is not planned for. Considerations include location, layout, food, and ‘sanitary arrangements’, but most importantly, organisers are warned not to recce potential sites ‘on a fine day in May’ but wait for more inclement weather, when a truer picture of a site is revealed. In the same chapter it is also suggested that club leaders are quartered away from the boys in ‘comfort and peace’ in recognition of the leisure time being sacrificed; and that good ‘feeding arrangements’ guarantee the success of the camp.<sup>521</sup> Pragmatic advice that recognised the need for personal space for the organisers and the importance of food, as inadequacies in either must have led to frayed tempers and tensions between boys and organisers.

Generally, reports of the police-led club camps present cheerfulness in the face of adversity; another form of character-building. In 1940, during Manchester’s camp, despite rationing hampering the supply of local produce, campers were not deterred and ‘brought along their own rationed food rather than miss the pleasures of those weekends under canvas’.<sup>522</sup> A decade later, at Hull, camp was a wash out in the summer of 1950, sports day had to be cancelled, but the official visiting party made up of local worthies

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>520</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, p. xii.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid, pp. 168-190.

<sup>522</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, p. 7.

including the Sheriff of Hull and the Chief Constable ‘still found smiling faces despite the rain.’<sup>523</sup>

Thus, police-led club camps, like those across the boys’ club movement, entertained an idealised view of nature. The lyrical accounts of camp life found in club annual reports emphasised the freedom and happiness boys experienced in their engagement with the natural world. Moreover, the benefits continued back at home as the boys could reflect positively upon their experience. Police-led camps were not single-sex utopias as police wives were often drafted in to help out. Although inclement weather inevitably intruded, at times, upon the rural idyll, boys were taught to be resilient and keep ‘smiling’ in the face of adversity.

### **Conclusion**

In exploring the character-building aspects of police club camps, the emphasis upon friendship, the vision behind the camps and the idealisation of nature, they do not deviate particularly from the experience of the wider boys’ club movement. By participating in camp activities away from the city streets and engaging with nature, boys were encouraged to build their characters, become manly, be good citizens, and be resilient in the face of adversity. The emphasis placed on the importance of weekend and annual camps by club organisers implied that they viewed the city as inherently problematic as true progress could only be made once the boys were removed from that corrupting environment. The boys’ own agendas may have been somewhat different however. The club camp was often the boys’ only holiday and it may well have provided them with lasting memories of freedom and happiness. Finally, friendship was also encouraged, between boys and between the boys and club organisers, who acted as role models. This latter notion, due to child protection considerations, sounds an alarm to modern ears. There are elements of the police-led boys’ club and camp, which could be replicated within the context of modern youth justice and features which cannot and it is interesting to explore these in the following chapter.

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<sup>523</sup> *The Daily Mail* (Hull), 3 August 1950, p. 5.

## Chapter Seven: Modern implications

### Introduction

Having explored the phenomenon of police-led boys' clubs within their historical context, the following chapter will look at the way these clubs from the interwar and immediate post-war period relate to approaches to youth justice today. Firstly, it argues why it is worthwhile to use the past to inform the present by reviewing the work of relevant historians and criminologists; and briefly considers some past present comparisons. Secondly, it gives an overview of current thinking on masculinity incorporating the views of sociologists, criminologists and historians, in order to understand its relationship with youth crime. Thirdly, it compares the aims of two Manchester boxing clubs seventy years apart. Finally, it explores if the police-led example could inform tackling present-day youth violence by drawing parallels between club activities and themes within the UK government's 'Serious Violence Strategy', while at the same time considering the police clubs' limitations.

### Why a historical perspective is important

First it is important to establish why using the past to inform the present in the context of youth justice, is important by underlining the benefits of having an open dialogue between historians, sociologists and criminologists. Twenty years ago criminologist Tony Jefferson was already championing an interdisciplinary approach to better understand criminal justice, he stressed: 'a continuing need to situate crime in relation to broader social relations' and that 'disciplines, such as media and cultural studies, anthropology, and psychoanalysis' need to be drawn upon by the criminologist as well as 'history, sociology, and political studies.'<sup>524</sup>

From the historian's point of view, Carter Wood, who has written extensively about the history of violence, argues for a dialogue between history, social and cultural studies and evolutionary psychology when exploring violent crime, as 'historians who are interested in understanding how people think and why they act as they do have much to gain from listening to (and talking back to) the biological sciences.'<sup>525</sup> In addition, sociologist

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<sup>524</sup> Tony Jefferson, 'Introduction: Special Issue 1996', *The British Journal of Criminology* 36.3 (1996), p. 337.

<sup>525</sup> John Carter Wood, 'A Change of Perspective: Integrating Evolutionary Psychology into the Historiography of Violence', *The British Journal of Criminology* 51.3 (2011), p. 493.

Stanley Cohen, famous for his work on moral panics, has pointed out that sociologists have a role in exposing ‘over-reaction’, ‘exaggeration, hysteria, prejudice and panic.’<sup>526</sup> This can also be the role of the historian.

A constant problem is the harking back of social commentators to a ‘golden age’ of youth justice. John Muncie underlines this in his criminology text on *Youth & Crime*, he identifies reoccurring themes through two hundred years of youth justice history to today. He highlights a persistence in ‘social concern’ about juvenile delinquency; ‘a series of contradictory and competing discourses of which the most familiar is that of national decline and moral regeneration’ which make it ‘clear that delinquency is not simply a crime problem.’ He concludes that:

The recurring fears directed at young people probably tell us more about adult concerns for morality, national security, unemployment, leisure, independence, imperialism, and so on than they do about the nature and extent of young offending.<sup>527</sup>

Muncie also defines the current structure of youth justice strategies which involves welfare, prevention and punishment.<sup>528</sup> He reveals youth justice as a messy mixture of all three. Moreover he argues: ‘Neither welfare (meeting needs) nor justice (responding to deeds) is ever present in pure form. The youth justice system contains elements of both, thus ensuring that a complex, ambiguous and confused *melange* of policies and practices exists at any one time’.<sup>529</sup> With regards to prevention he adds that current youth justice discourses include elements of ‘welfare-paternalism’, ‘liberal justice’, ‘neo-conservative remoralization’, ‘neo-liberal responsabilization’, ‘neo-conservative authoritarianism’, ‘managerialism’ and ‘human rights’. ‘Welfare-paternalism’ is perhaps the most relevant category for the prevention strategies explored in this chapter, Muncie defines it as: ‘Youth as deprived. Care, guidance and supervision as the ‘paramount consideration’. Focus on needs. Rationale to respond to individual needs.’<sup>530</sup>

Like Cohen and Muncie, historians Kate Bradley and Abigail Wills have identified the repetitive nature of fears and concerns regarding the moral degeneration of youth and the prevention of youth crime. Bradley, for example, has used the history of the youth club

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<sup>526</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), London: Routledge, 2002, p. xxxiv.

<sup>527</sup> John Muncie, *Youth and Crime*, 3rd Edition, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid, pp. 271-349.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid, p. 303.

<sup>530</sup> Muncie, *Youth Crime*, p. 347.

movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century to challenge the recent claim by Siobhan Freegard, (co-founder of Netmums) that today's children grow older sooner than their predecessors due to 'a toxic combination of marketing, media and peer pressure', she argues:

As the youth clubs and movements of the nineteenth century onwards found, young people have long been keen to acquire new skills and to take on responsibilities, as part of their progress to adulthood. The desire to seem older than their years and to 'fit in' was familiar to juvenile court magistrates from the 1920s onwards. The grandparents of today's teenagers were subject to regular concerns about their media consumption, from their reading of 'nasty' imported comics to their 'American' tastes in music and fervent following of the Beatles and other pop bands.<sup>531</sup>

Bradley's standpoint sets a precedent for how the history of boys' clubs can be used to comment on the experiences of modern youths.

Wills addresses this area in an article about 'myth-making in juvenile justice policy' and her work complements the points Muncie makes. She argues that 'public debate about juvenile justice' is defined by two contradicting myths 'that the past was a golden age of law and order, and that treatment of juvenile criminals is more enlightened today.' This has led to 'complacency' in youth justice policy in the UK and 'a punitive stance towards juvenile criminals that is in many ways more severe than at any point since the 1850s.' She concludes that considering more than a century of youth justice history reveals that 'resource-intensive, personalised, rehabilitative approaches are more successful in creating law-abiding adults than retributive brutalising and impersonal ones.'<sup>532</sup> Police-led boys' clubs, although not particularly 'resource-intensive', as they were staffed by volunteers, could be described as 'personalised rehabilitative approaches.' The clubs were open on a daily, or almost daily basis, giving their organisers and instructors plenty of opportunity to get to know the boys personally.

Therefore, historical research can be used to challenge 'myth-making' and debunk bad history that is used to justify policy. However greater benefits could be derived from collaboration between historians and criminologists. Historian Paul Lawrence, in his article on 'history, criminology and the "use" of the past', asks why the disciplines of

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<sup>531</sup> Kate Bradley, 'Is modern childhood over too soon?', History & Policy, at <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/is-modern-childhood-over-too-soon>, accessed 3 November 2016.

<sup>532</sup> Abigail Wills, 'Historical myth-making in juvenile justice policy', History & Policy, at <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/historical-myth-making-in-juvenile-justice-policy>, accessed 9 December 2016.

sociological criminology and criminal justice history are not better aligned considering they have similar subject matter and methodologies. He argues, the disconnect has arisen from the different ‘purposes’ with which they imbue their work and ‘differing disciplinary perceptions of the relationship between the past, present and future.’ For example, sociological criminologists are usually trained within the ‘departments of sociology, social policy and law’ and therefore assume ‘the methods and perspectives of those disciplines’; whereas criminal justice historians largely concentrate on the past, and do ‘not view “the present” as their domain’. However, Lawrence urges, there is much scope for collaboration between sociological criminologists and criminal justice historians.

Lawrence cites Ian Loader and Richard Spark’s ‘proposed public criminology’, which has three main elements: firstly ‘to produce primary knowledge pertaining to crime and criminal justice policy’; secondly ‘to strive to increase the regard for this evidence among the media’; and thirdly to ‘unearth the significance of the crime question within contemporary society.’ Lawrence argues that each aspect would benefit from a historical dimension. The first, he argues, could be enhanced by the use of historical data. Historians researching interpersonal violence in the nineteenth and twentieth century, for instance, have shown that there has been a decline in violence over the years challenging ‘contemporary concerns over growing levels of violent behaviour’. The second, could be enriched by historians’ engagement with television, radio and accessible history books. The third, by the ‘interrogation of the social significance of fears and debates about crime’ by ‘drawing on historical research.’ Lawrence elaborates on this point further, maintaining that historians can dissect how such debates have changed over time, and focus not on ‘what happened’ but ‘what did it feel like to be there?’: encouraging an awareness of an ‘ethically responsible transition from present to future.’<sup>533</sup> These elements are particularly relevant to the subject matter of the thesis and feed-in to the structure of this chapter. Thus, by reviewing what criminologists say about masculinity and relating it to the uses of boxing in the present and in the past, and exploring how the quotidian model of the police-led boys’ club could inform tackling youth violence now, it is possible to develop an ethical awareness of the ‘transition from present to future.’

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<sup>533</sup> Paul Lawrence, ‘History, criminology and the ‘use’ of the past’, *Theoretical Criminology* 16.3 (2012), pp. 313-25.

A further argument for using historical research to inform current youth justice policy is justified by some evidence of the same ground being re-trodden without apparent reference to the past. Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney's 'national strategy for the policing of children and young people' published in 2015, for example, echoes elements of Dain's 1932 pamphlet *Police Welfare Work Among Boys*. In her strategy Pinkney emphasises: 'It's all about trust; building good relationships between children and the police.'<sup>534</sup> As demonstrated in this thesis, 'Building good relationships' and 'trust' between young people, albeit boys, and the police was a central concern of the police-led boys' club movement. Similarities between the publications of both Chief Constables is no more apparent than in these following two statements. Pinkney argues:

Evidence shows that highly punitive sanctions have little impact on recidivism, so enforcement should be considered appropriately and only used where necessary to prevent others from becoming victims. Getting it wrong, especially when it results in the unnecessary criminalisation of C&YP, can mean heavy costs to the individual for life and the wider society.<sup>535</sup>

In a similar vein Dain writes:

Stern punishments, birchings, imprisonments, and all the punitive rigour of the law, was the only recognised way of dealing with youthful delinquencies...It effected no improvement and made no impression upon the problem except to harden and degrade. The effect of it on the vast majority of cases was to smash the self-respect out of the young offenders who were subjected to it; and once self-respect was gone, all is gone and hope of real growth into good citizenship disappears.<sup>536</sup>

Although the use of language is different; the older passage, for example, uses more colourful and emotive language, but both passages are starkly similar in their argument and certain phrases are interchangeable. Consider: 'punitive sanctions' and 'the punitive rigour of the law', have 'little impact on recidivism' and effect 'no improvement' and moreover can damage 'the individual for life and the wider society' and 'once self-respect' is gone all 'hope of real growth into citizenship disappears.' The echoes indicate a certain continuity in the preoccupations of these particular police chiefs and raises the question whether modern policy makers are aware that the same issues have been considered in such depth before.

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<sup>534</sup> Olivia Pinkney, 'Child Centred Policing: National Strategy for the Policing of Children & Young People', National Police Chiefs' Council, at <http://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/edhr/2015/CYP%20Strategy%202015%202017%20August%202015.pdf>, accessed 12 November 2016, p. 1.

<sup>535</sup> Pinkney, 'Child Centred Policing', p. 4.

<sup>536</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, pp. 6-7.

## Masculinity

Having established the importance of using the past to inform the present and presented evidence of the continuity of concerns about the relationship between police and youths, and before going onto explore what lessons can be learnt from the examples of boxing, and the police-led club today, it is essential to give a theoretical basis to the concept of masculinity. Establishing a theoretical context to the relationship between masculinity and violence, for example, provides a better understanding of the methods that police-led clubs used to tackle youth crime. Masculinity is a recurring theme in this thesis, as demonstrated by the preceding two chapters, and it is a far from a straight forward concept. Tony Jefferson has pointed out that masculinity is a most confusing concept from a scientific standpoint and, thus ‘partly in consequence’, is also a ‘highly contentious’ one.<sup>537</sup> Thus, it is useful to look at the work of relevant sociologists and criminologists as well as historians who explore themes such as violence, gender, class, adolescence and physicality in relation to masculinity or masculinities.

Sociologist Anthony Ellis has recently published a book on contemporary masculinities and violence in post-industrial working-class communities in northern England which explores ‘the lives of men who use interpersonal violence against others.’ These men are usually aged between 16 and 24, are both the victims and perpetrators of violent crime, and are usually ‘experiencing a variety of indicators of deprivation: including living in social-rented housing, in communities with high levels of poverty, and not being in employment.’<sup>538</sup> In arguing that violence is part of contemporary masculinity in post-industrial working-class areas, he demonstrates the changing nature of the way in which masculinity is now constructed. As summarised in Chapter Five the history of the relationship between masculinity and violence reveals evidence of both continuity and change.

The relationship between violence and the working classes in the nineteenth century sets a precedent for modern attitudes. John Carter Wood, for example, explains that the middle classes defined themselves in the nineteenth century by seeing themselves as

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<sup>537</sup> Tony Jefferson, ‘Masculinities and Crimes’, in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Criminology: Second Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 535.

<sup>538</sup> Anthony Ellis, *Men, Masculinities and Violence: An Ethnographic Study*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2015, pp. 2-4.



‘civilized’ comparing themselves against the ‘savage’ and violent working classes. He states:

Without denying the seriousness of violent crime in Britain today, it is striking how much the images of social chaos offered by tabloids such as the *Daily Mail* or *Sun* – in condemning ‘broken Britain’ – adhere to a model of discourse set in the early nineteenth century. Such continuities may be dispiriting; but they suggest that long-term patterns in the relationships among class, space and violence are worthy of continued investigation.<sup>539</sup>

Returning to the present, the work of criminologists Rod Earle and Deborah H. Drake explores the relationship between masculinity and crime that underlines the importance of gender and class. Indeed they reveal that as in ‘academic criminology there is a tendency to disassociate the concept of masculinity from that of gender’, so too the ‘embedded nature of class hierarchies’ are ignored. They confirm that gender is certainly a factor in the committing of crime as borne out by UK crime statistics such as the prevalence of young men in prison and figures such as ‘men are responsible for 92% of violent crimes against the person and 97% of burglaries.’ Moreover, they commend the work of sociologists James Messerschmidt and Raewyn Connell that consolidates ‘a theoretical framework that can account for men’s preeminent position in the gender dimensions of crime.’ They reveal that according to Messerschmidt, for some men ‘doing crime’ is ‘doing masculinity’ and ‘men’s accomplishment of various diverse criminalised activities provides them with masculine resources and status which may be as much emotional as material.’ Moreover, ‘general patterns of masculine practice that constitute hegemonic masculinity, such as competitiveness, physical toughness, emotional hardness and heterosexuality, are always personally configured according to circumstances and the structured opportunities of particular men,’ and their opportunities are subject to ‘their class position’ and ethnicity.<sup>540</sup> Messerschmidt also raises the interesting question of ‘what type of masculinity people construct who do not commit crime and how is it different from the gender of those who do.’ In order to answer this question and explore the concept of masculinity fully he has called for ‘a variety of methodological approaches, from historical and documentary research to ethnographies and life histories, to examine

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<sup>539</sup> John Carter Wood, ‘Reading Spaces and Reading Violence in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *Journal for the Study of British Cultures* 17.2 (2010), p. 141.

<sup>540</sup> Rod Earl and Deborah H. Drake, ‘Men, Masculinity, and Crime’, in Brooks, Carolyn and Schissell, Bernard (eds) *Marginality and Condemnation: A Critical Introduction to Criminology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Fernwood Publishing, pp.350-370.

how gender, race, class and sexuality differently affect crime.’<sup>541</sup> The question of ‘what type of masculinity people construct who do not commit crime?’ is highly relevant to this thesis. As demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six, boys were encouraged to construct masculinities that eschewed crime by participating in activities which encouraged discipline and self-control, such as gymnastics and boxing; and escaping the negative influence of the city streets, by embracing the rural idyll of life at camp.

Raewyn Connell has written extensively about masculinities including themes such as masculinities and organisations and masculinities and adolescence.<sup>542</sup> With regards to the former she argues that ‘gender regimes can be found, and mapped... across the board’. She adds that ‘they are complex structures involving gender divisions of labour, gender relations of power, gender patterns of emotional relations and gendered culture.’<sup>543</sup> Police-led boys clubs can be seen in this light as they were male dominated institutions with women relegated to the peripheries in the necessitous needs committees, helping out with refreshments at camp or donating money. Moreover, these concepts provide insight into how the masculinity of adolescents was constructed in the past. She underlines that adolescence and masculinity ‘does not rely on any notion of a fixed cycle of development’ and that young people do not view themselves as adolescent but rather as young adults. She reveals that masculinities in this ‘loosely defined period of life’ are:

Constructions, sometimes provisional and sometimes long-term, within a gender order. The interplay of gender relations with other structures of social difference and inequality means that the construction of masculinity has different starting-points in different lives. This results in a diversity of trajectories, very well documented in recent research...

Developing bodies are re-interpreted and challenged, sometimes damaged. Institutions such as high school are encountered and negotiated, and the powers of the adult world are approached and confronted.

These encounters form an arena of pleasure, humour, curiosity, relationship-building and success, but also an area of anxiety and violence.<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> James W. Messerschmidt, ‘Men, Masculinities, and Crime’, in Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R.W. Connell (eds), *Handbook of Studies on Men & Masculinities*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004, pp. 209-10.

<sup>542</sup> Raewyn, Connell, ‘A Thousand Miles from Kind: Men, Masculinities and Modern Institutions’, *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 16.3 (2008), pp. 237-252; Raewyn Connell, ‘Growing up masculine: rethinking the significance of adolescence in making masculinities’, *The Irish Journal of Sociology* 14.2 (2005), pp. 11-28.

<sup>543</sup> Connell, ‘A Thousand Miles from Kind’, p. 242.

<sup>544</sup> Connell, ‘Growing up masculine’, p. 24.

Connell also argues that sport is a ‘body practice’ instrumental in forming masculinity and ‘organised competitive team sport’ such as football ‘is intensely gender-segregated and male dominated.’ She adds that ‘recreation involving bodies in ritualised combat is thus presented to enormous numbers of youth as a site of masculine camaraderie, a source of identity, an arena of competitions for prestige, and a possible career.’<sup>545</sup> Concepts that Connell explores that are especially relevant to this thesis are the idea of challenging and interpreting developing male bodies, and the channelling of violence through ‘body practice’ and ‘ritualised combat’. Police-led boys’ clubs aimed to challenge young male bodies by engaging them in rule-bound physical activities, which interpreted masculinity in a gender-normative way. Moreover, by performing ‘body practice’ through pursuits such as physical training, gymnastics and drill and ‘ritualised combat’, through sports such as boxing and fencing, club organisers sought to channel adolescent male energies away from violence.

Thus, it has been established by reviewing the work of sociologist and criminologists that violence is part of contemporary masculinity, that the relationship between masculinity and violence has a long history, as do negative depictions of the relationship between the working classes and violence. Masculinities must be understood within the context of gender and class. Moreover, it is undeniable that young men are responsible for the majority of violent crime and that for some ‘doing crime is doing masculinity’. The role of the body is important in adolescent masculinities and physicality can have a civilising effect on violence when harnessed within the restrained environment of the boxing ring. Within this context the history of the police-led boys’ club can inform youth justice today because, as demonstrated by the previous chapters, it incorporates themes relevant to contemporary masculinities such as youth crime, working-class cultures and physicality. Club organisers conceptualised these themes as dealing with the same issues that are being analysed and discussed today. This is evident in the following section which compares two boxing clubs active in Manchester seventy years apart.

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<sup>545</sup> Raewyn Connell, ‘Growing up masculine: rethinking the significance of adolescence in making masculinities’, *The Irish Journal of Sociology* 14.2 (2005), p. 15.

## **Two Boxing Clubs**

In April 2010 the Home Office provided £290,000 to Greater Manchester Police (GMP) as part of the Tackling Knives Action Plan 3/Serious Youth Violence (TKAP3/SYV). The aim was to fund serious youth violence intervention and support projects across the four Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) of Manchester, Bolton, Wigan and Oldham, focusing on 13 to 24 year olds in order to reduce SYV offences and increase public confidence in the police. One such project, in the Manchester CPS, was the Boxing Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) Partnership Intervention, where GMP, GMFRS and the Safer Schools Partnership (SSP) worked together at Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club with young people in gangs. The boxing club, set up in 2008 with funding from TKAP1, had three members of GMP staff volunteering on the project which monitored the behaviour of gang members and gathered intelligence on crimes being committed in the local area. The attendance at the boxing club of a founding member of a new local gang, for example, was monitored alongside his attendance and behaviour at school and whether he was meeting his bail conditions. Another gang member, with the approval of his family, regularly attended boxing sessions and was taken home from the club each evening, he attended welfare sessions with GMP's Youth Relations Manager and his behaviour and attendance was monitored at school. Moreover, a referral through the boxing club resulted in GMP finding out about violent crime and knife incidents in a primary school and a domestic violence case was referred to the head coach.<sup>546</sup>

During the period an 18.4% reduction in SYV offences was recorded in the Manchester CPS. The positive impact on the reduction of SYV offences was attributed 'not only to innovative policing enforcement tactics but also through the dedication and commitment of partner agencies such as probation, youth offending services and mentoring.'<sup>547</sup>

Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club is located on the premises of Moss Side Fire Station. It is still in existence at the time of writing, having survived beyond the initial period of

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<sup>546</sup> Elizabeth Wilburn, 'TKAP3/Serious Youth Violence Best Practice Guide, Second Draft', unpublished report, Greater Manchester Police Museum and Archives, Manchester, 2011, pp. 3-10.

<sup>547</sup> Wilburn, 'TKAP3/Serious Youth Violence Best Practice Guide, pp. 34-35.

TKAP funding.<sup>548</sup> It is currently run by firefighters and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) volunteers. Their mission statement is to:

Help to develop the personal attributes of the young individuals within the community we serve to reflect the qualities and attributes we value as fire fighters. We aim to act as role models and mentors to help mould our members to be role models to the wider community.

They add that:

Since 2008 our success can be measured by literally thousands of members who have engaged with our coaching team and have success in both personal development as well as sporting excellence. We have had a number of National Champions as well as our boxing team competing in thousands of boxing contests at every level of competition around the country as well as internationally.<sup>549</sup>

They state that ‘Moss Side is a socially and economically diverse suburb of Manchester, producing a youth culture where gang involvement and crime can be a threat amongst young people’. As with the police boys’ club, their prevention work is also meant to reduce their own potential future work through personal interaction with the youths albeit acting solely as ‘role model’s’ rather than ‘older brothers’ or ‘friends’:

As fire fighters, and prior to our initiatives existence we experienced a negative attitude from some of these young people and recognised that our work can often be a direct result of the actions taken by disillusioned young people with low expectations of what life has to offer.

Our initiative is intended to...meaningfully engage with young people on a personal level so that they can recognise our long term commitment to them and the community; we intend to be role models whilst representing the organisation we serve.<sup>550</sup>

Boxing was chosen for the club which aims to reduce youth crime in the local area because it ‘requires courage, discipline, dedication, focus and respect for others’ and ‘increases self esteem (sic), and can increase the respect that an individual gets from their peer group.’<sup>551</sup>

Finally, the fire station boxing club (described as a ‘grass root initiative’) is run solely by volunteers in their free time:

At present the project has been run on a goodwill basis relying on Nigel Travis who is a firefighter volunteering his time. Nigel is the Club Leader and ensures, with the assistance of several volunteers, that all classes are facilitated and he ensures that our gym engages with the community

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<sup>548</sup> ‘Contact Us’, Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club, at <http://mosssidefirebox.com/contact-us/>, accessed 20 December 2016.

<sup>549</sup> ‘Welcome to Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club’, Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club, at <http://mosssidefirebox.com/>, accessed 20 December 2016.

<sup>550</sup> ‘About’, Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club, at <http://mosssidefirebox.com/about/>, accessed 20 December 2016.

<sup>551</sup> ‘Why Boxing?’, Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club, at <http://mosssidefirebox.com/why-boxing/>, accessed 20 December 2016.

on a daily basis. There are several highly motivated individuals who are involved with our club which allow us to function on a voluntary basis.<sup>552</sup>

Boxing features as a primary activity of all of the police-led clubs. A brief glance at annual reports and newspaper articles concerning the clubs reveal the centrality of boxing matches and tournaments in daily club life. One can make a direct comparison between Manchester City Police Lads' Club and Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club. The lads' club hosted several regional boxing championships and, like the fire station club, produced regional and national boxing champions.<sup>553</sup> Similar to the fire fighters at Moss Side, police officers volunteered at the boys' club. The gymnasium in Mill Street Police Station included 'a good boxing ring, built for the Club by members of the "C" Division.'<sup>554</sup> The same 'officers and men' devoted 'an appreciable part of their spare time to the Club, to keep the good work going.'<sup>555</sup>

In a book of press cuttings charting the life of Manchester City Police Lads' Club, boxing makes an appearance on several occasions. A cutting from the *Daily Dispatch* for Wednesday February 2 1938 reports: 'Tuesday and Wednesday are physical training and boxing nights...they have the benefit of skilled instruction such as you or I would have difficulty obtaining whatever we wished to pay.'<sup>556</sup> The last section of this quote could either be viewed as an example of journalistic hyperbole or indicate an undertone of less eligibility.

The main aim behind the foundation of the club was revealed in another cutting, this time from the *Daily Express* February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938 which stated:

Almost nightly 150 working and workless youths recruited by policemen from street corners go to Mill Street Police Station, Manchester – for pleasure.

They are members of Manchester City Police Lads' Club – the only of its kind with headquarters in a police station – ages ranging from 14 to 17.<sup>557</sup>

Again the phrase 'for pleasure' could point to an undertone of criticism that suggested that it was problematic that 'the sorts of kids who hang around on street corners' were

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<sup>552</sup> 'Why Boxing?'

<sup>553</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>554</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, Manchester: Brunswick Press, 1939, p. 4.

<sup>555</sup> *Manchester City Police Lads' Club Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, Manchester: Warburton & Sons, 1941, p. 3.

<sup>556</sup> Press Cuttings, p. 6.

<sup>557</sup> Alexander Aberdeen, *Manchester City Police lads' Club Press Cuttings, 1937-1942*, p. 4.

rounded up and rewarded with pleasurable activities, much like the modern *Daily Mail* trope of PlayStations in prison cells.<sup>558</sup> Thus, the recruitment of local boys to the club was intended to reduce juvenile crime in the area. Like Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club, located in the fire station, Manchester City Police Lads' Club was located in the police station. Such a location could be significant for several reasons. Police or fire stations could be perceived as an exciting hyper-masculine space, that is associated with legitimate authority, making the clubs they host all the more attractive to potential members. Moreover, as police and potentially the fire-service (due to arson calls) are on the 'front line' when dealing with anti-social behaviour caused by youths, it may have seemed an obvious choice of location in case the young people became troublesome.

One major difference between the clubs is that girls are welcome at Moss side, which is interesting as it could be argued that boxing is still seen as a predominantly masculine activity. Sometimes, however, it may be the case that girls are offered boxing or kick-boxing activities as self-defence training which keeps such activities within the boundaries of normative gender roles.

As with the fire station boxing club, the boys' club at Manchester was concerned with improving the local community and preventing youths from committing criminal damage, as can be seen by the following quote from their annual report for 1938-39:

Unless our adolescents, in towns particularly, are provided with the means to healthy exercise and recreation, no one must be surprised if they run wild and become a nuisance to the rest of the community. They require the premises where they can meet together; trained instructors to get and keep them fit in mind and body; and above all they must have as leaders men who, no matter what their actual age, can play the role of decent elder brother to all their lads and keep in line with their development.<sup>559</sup>

As with Moss Side, club volunteers aimed to become mentors to their members, although the concept of 'decent elder brother' is somewhat different from modern interpretations of mentoring (more on this later).

The activity of boxing had its own section in the annual reports of the club. This following quote reveals the centrality of boxing to day-to-day activities at the club:

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<sup>558</sup> Posing in cell with his creature comforts: 19-year-old convicted killer shows off his PlayStation, TV and hoard of snacks', *Mail Online*, 6 January 2012, at <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/article-2082656>, accessed 30 April 2017.

<sup>559</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 6.

Every encouragement is given to those members of the Club who show an aptitude for Boxing. Instruction has been given regularly on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings during the winter and also at times when special training for contests has been necessary. The Club spirit is well to the fore here. The lads have come to consider it an honour to box for the Club, and the success of the team is the thing that matters. Perhaps no sport is better for developing those fine, manly qualities we see so often displayed by these young boxers, who give and take hard knocks and come up smiling the best of pals at the end of it.<sup>560</sup>

Moreover, like Moss side, boxing increased self-esteem and respect and amongst the boys ‘who give and take hard knocks and come up smiling’. In the 1941 annual report, boxing is valued ‘as an aid to physical development’, ‘self-control’ and a way of ‘enabling the boys to look after themselves, should the necessity arise’.<sup>561</sup> Weaker or smaller boys, like girls today, could have been provided with such sporting activities as a means to self-defence.

However, the extent to which boxing at the lads’ club was perceived to improve the local community went far beyond the modern example:

Where the Police and local youth get together in these circumstances, there seems to be no limit to the amount of good which may accrue for the community in general. There can surely be no better example of a development of the preventive side of Police work.

As to the relationship between the members of the Force who run the Club and the lads, there is complete confidence and friendliness without loss of respect, and we can see in these friends of ours not only good citizens of the future but also potential allies in our work upholding the laws of the Country.<sup>562</sup>

The main difference here to the modern day club is the optimism which sees ‘no limit to the amount of good’. As already discussed, policy makers are less hopeful today regarding youth crime, hence the need for historians, amongst others, to counter pessimistic narratives. Moreover, the concept of ‘friendship’ between mentors and mentees has also changed, an issue that is discussed in the following section.

Finally, Manchester is not the only city in which direct comparisons can be made between a historic police club and modern prevention strategies. Back in the early 2000s a scheme called Promoting Prevention was applied in Swansea. It was described as a ‘multi-agency partnership’ between the ‘statutory and voluntary sectors’ in Swansea that aimed to prevent ‘youth offending amongst 10 to 17 year olds’.<sup>563</sup> It sought to ‘create a local

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<sup>560</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 9.

<sup>561</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, p. 4.

<sup>562</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 18.

<sup>563</sup> Stephen Case and Kevin Haines, ‘Promoting Prevention: Evaluating a Multi-Agency Initiative of Youth Consultation and Crime Prevention in Swansea’, *Children & Society* 18.5 (2004), p. 355.



climate of change' that valued ideals such as 'community' and 'citizenship.'<sup>564</sup> It did so through a variety of initiatives including promoting good behaviour in schools, alternatives to formal schooling, meeting with families, mentoring, cognitive-behavioural therapy focusing on anger management and asking the opinions of school pupils.<sup>565</sup>

The significance of the similarities between the two clubs in Manchester show that boxing is a means of learning self-control and curbing violent tendencies, but also a way of gaining self-respect and celebrating physicality for working-class, mainly, boys of the age most likely to be involved in, and, or, the victims of crime. Boxing is and was a way for boys and young men, particularly those who feel closed off from the benefits of education and tangible career trajectories, to find meaning in their life and develop self-esteem by building a 'reputation' in the ring. Such a 'reputation' enables them to earn a heroic 'hard man' image that celebrates the body rather than damage it with activities that involve drugs and violent crime.<sup>566</sup> Thus, boxing can (and did) provide a positive alternative to anti-social activities perpetrated on the streets. 'Positive alternatives' forms an important strand of the UK government's Serious Violence Strategy, published in 2018. The following section will use this document as a case study to explore further parallels between police-led clubs and modern youth justice.

### **Case study: Serious Violence Strategy**

The Serious Violence Strategy policy document, published by the UK government in April 2018, aims to: 'support young people to lead productive lives away from violence,' by focusing 'on early intervention and prevention' strategies 'which can help catch young people before they go down the wrong path, encouraging them to make positive choices.'<sup>567</sup> It was written partially in response to the trend in UK crime figures that 'while overall crime continues to fall, homicide, knife crime and gun crime have risen since 2014, and within this trend there has been 'shift towards younger victims and perpetrators.' It is important to add that most of the violence experienced in the UK is 'male on male.'<sup>568</sup> The increase in violent crime and the age and sex of the victims and

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<sup>564</sup> Case and Haines, 'Promoting Prevention,' p. 368.

<sup>565</sup> Case and Haines, 'Promoting Prevention,' pp. 357-9.

<sup>566</sup> Clive Emsley, *Hard Men: The English and Violence since 1750*, London: Hambledon and London, 2005; Connell, 'Growing up masculine', p. 24.

<sup>567</sup> 'Policy paper: Serious Violence Strategy', at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>, accessed 28 June 2018.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

perpetrators is central to the question of how the history of police-led boys club can relate to the Serious Crime Strategy, as club members were of a relatable age, gender and socio-economic background, in that they were viewed as subject to the temptations of juvenile crime.

There are four main themes to the policy: ‘tackling county lines [internet-based drug supply networks involving vulnerable ‘runners’] and misuse of drugs, early intervention and prevention, supporting communities and partnerships, and an effective law enforcement and criminal justice response.’<sup>569</sup> The theme most relevant to the history of the police-led boys’ club is that of ‘early intervention and prevention’ which argues that young people can be prevented from committing serious violent crime and ‘being drawn into exploitation by building resilience, supporting positive alternatives and providing timely interventions at a “teachable” moment.’<sup>570</sup> The document then goes on to describe a range of interventions within this context which include: ‘building resilience’ and creating ‘positive alternatives’, building ‘trusted relationships’, and referring young adults in custody to ‘effective employment partners’.<sup>571</sup> These themes are reflected by the history of the police-led boys’ club.

With regards to ‘building resilience’ and providing ‘positive alternatives’, the schedules at police-led clubs were dominated by physical activities which aimed to do just that. Chapter Five explored the significance of teaching sports, in particular boxing, within this context. Boxing clubs are still popular today, in addition to Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Club discussed above, as revealed in Chapter Two, the club at Norwich still exists in part as a boxing club. It has been shown that boxing was one of the most popular activities provided by the police clubs. Large tournaments were held, sometimes with hundreds or thousands of spectators and the clubs produced regional and national champions. Moreover, boxing was valued by club founders not only as a means to improve physical fitness, but as a way to learn self-control, self-defence and fairness. Boxing increased self-esteem and respect amongst the boys who were taught to be resilient. Instruction in boxing at the clubs aimed to produce these outcomes by instilling ‘codes and restraints’ converting the potential for everyday interpersonal violence, which

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<sup>569</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid, pp. 57-71.

may have been experienced in the streets through fighting and anti-social behaviour, into the right sort of masculinity. In addition, boxing was taught in the clubs to working-class boys by working-class police officers. It was a way to reinforce codes of using violence in a restrained way in keeping with notions of working-class respectability, with the added factor that police officers could be seen as the ideal legitimizers of violence in their role as arbiters of the state. Moreover, success in sports, especially boxing, was an alternative way of gaining a “hard” man reputation, a positive alternative to becoming the member of a street gang.

When exploring the theme of ‘trusted relationships’ it is useful to consider criminologist John Muncie’s stance on the problematic nature of encounters between police and youths. He demonstrates that relations between police and youths ‘appear to be highly racialized and gendered’ and the move away from the informal system of cautioning, common from ‘the early 1970s until the mid-1990s’, towards intervention has ‘removed large parts of police discretion and effectively abolished informal action.’<sup>572</sup> The move away from informality in recent years, one could argue, makes the building of ‘trusted relationships’ between police and youths all the more critical, due to the reduction in opportunities for non-confrontational interaction between the two. As illustrated above, building ‘trusted relationships’ between police officers and young people was a major concern for both Chief Constable Dain in Norwich eighty years ago and Chief Constable Pinkney today. Organisers of police-led clubs aimed to build ‘trusted relationships’ between themselves and club members through the concept of ‘friendship’ and the idea of an ‘elder brother’ role model. As illustrated in Chapter Five, street ‘loafing’, or hanging about on street corners, had been a problem from the nineteenth century onwards, in poor urban areas, and was still in evidence in the interwar period. Police-led boys’ clubs aimed to remove boys from the streets by providing them with alternative leisure pursuits in the clubs, alongside the offer of friendship with both other members and the police officers who ran the clubs. Dain, for example, aimed to provide ‘the right environment’, by offering them healthy energetic pursuits, and camaraderie with other boys.<sup>573</sup> At Manchester City Police Lads’ Club, they claimed to relieve the ills of living within a densely populated urban area, which caused boys to resort to finding their recreation on the streets. They

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<sup>572</sup> Muncie, *Youth & Crime*, pp. 256-7.

<sup>573</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 6.

wrote in an annual report that: ‘Unless our adolescents, in towns particularly, are provided with the means to healthy exercise and recreation, no one must be surprised if they run wild and become a nuisance to the rest of the community.’<sup>574</sup> Therefore, police-led boys’ clubs aimed to move boys from the negative, demoralising environment of the streets into a more supportive atmosphere. In this there are both parallels and contrasts with the situation today. The streets are still perceived as a negative environment for young people, who are sometimes forced there due to overcrowding at home, similar to that experienced in slum housing in the first half of the twentieth century. However, a completely new threat has emerged in the early twenty-first century in the imagined criminogenic environment of the internet, which can be accessed both on the street or in the home. This added factor further complicates the ability of the police to build ‘trusted relationships’ with young people as social relations play out in both physical and virtual worlds, or a messy combination of the two, considering that social media is available at all times through smart phones. For police-led clubs to be effective now, they would also need a strong online presence.

The club organisers’ solution to the problem of boys ‘running wild’ in the streets, included the positive influence of the ‘elder brother’ in the guise of the police officer who: ‘No matter what their actual age, can play the role of decent elder brother to all their lads and keep in line with their development.’<sup>575</sup> The founders of the clubs wrote extensively about the concept of ‘friendship’ between boys and men, but is there is some evidence that club members may have felt the same way. In Chapter Three the letters of two police club old boys were quoted. One, written in 1977, was from R.C. Catchpole (pages 76-77) who had been a member of Norwich Lads’ Club in the 1920s; and the other was written in 1987 by Ron Hepworth (page 57), who had been a member of Manchester City Police Lads’ Club in the late 1930s early 1940s. In his letter, Catchpole fondly remembered Dain, sparring with police officers Baker and Jarmey in the boxing ring, and learning how to ‘take care of himself’. Hepworth, on the other hand, explicitly described PC Tom Doody as ‘a long standing friend who made a great impression on my youth’, a person who ‘we looked up to as a friend of the youngsters’ alongside another officer, George Peters. Most significantly Hepworth met up with Doody after returning from

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<sup>574</sup> *Annual Report 1938-39*, p. 6.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

Burma seeking advice on his future and concluded his letter by writing: 'I shall always remember him as a great friend and almost like an elder brother who one could trust and seek advice.'<sup>576</sup> Thus, there is evidence that at least in these two cases trusted relationships were built up between the police officers and their club members.

Finally, with regards to 'effective employment partners', it was demonstrated in Chapter Five that police-led boys' clubs aimed to instil a strong work ethic, prepare boys for work and provide contacts with potential employers. The ability to follow rules and maintain self-control that physical activities, such as team sports and boxing, demanded were used to encourage a strong work ethic that would have made club members desirable employees. At Norwich and Swansea 'employers of labour' made use of the clubs 'as a sort of employment bureau', and there were 'good reports regarding the subsequent careers of the Club members.'<sup>577</sup> At Swansea several boys went onto higher education.<sup>578</sup>

Thus, themes from a contemporary government policy document can be used to indicate the relevance of police-led boys' clubs, active in the first half of the twentieth century to tackling youth justice today. However, before considering the police-led club as a possible panacea for youth crime, it is important to investigate if there was any evidence for their success and consider the limitations involved in replicating such clubs today.

### **How useful is the example of the police-led club?**

As demonstrated in Chapter Two local and national newspapers were confident in claiming that the clubs had reduced juvenile crime in their local areas and there was even some statistical evidence. Dain argued that his club had a very real effect on local juvenile crime figures at Norwich. He stated that: 'In 1913, 96 under-16s were charged at the local Police Courts, in 1919 this number reduced to 45, in 1922 it had fallen to twelve, in 1923 to seven, indeed, in some years no young person was sent to a reformatory or industrial school.' He claimed that the results were particularly significant considering that they had been achieved 'in a population round about 130,000, with much industrial congestion, a good deal of chronic unemployment, and many still remaining unwholesome housing

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<sup>576</sup> GMPMA, 'A' Box T. Doody, Memorial subscription letter from Ron Hepworth to Mr Griffiths, 21 Aug, 1987.

<sup>577</sup> Police Welfare Work. 1938. *The Police Review*, **46**(2391), pp. 425-426, p. 426

<sup>578</sup> 'Swansea Local Education Authority', page unknown.

conditions, poisonous to healthy growth for the young generation.<sup>579</sup> As explored in Chapter Three, Charles Russell, an important figure in the boys' club movement as a whole, upheld the success in Norwich. He wrote in 1932 that Norwich Lads' Club was 'most remarkable, even amazing', not only preventing juvenile crime but improving the health of the local area by reducing instances of VD.<sup>580</sup> Police involvement in lads' clubs was cited as reducing juvenile delinquency in the areas of other industrial cities and towns where they were held, such as in Hereford and Hyde and Manchester. At a club in Hereford founded by the ex-Chief Constable it was said that:

Previous to the inception of the institution, the behaviour of the lads from that particular district had been almost a daily source of complaint. Gambling and wanton mischief was rife.

The effect of the Club, as far as the Police are concerned, is that whereas juvenile courts dealing with lads from that area used to be of almost weekly occurrence, there has been no case of juvenile crime reported during the past four years from the district which the club is situated.<sup>581</sup>

A newspaper article written in 1931 claimed that, because of their lads' club, Hyde had 'the lowest rate of juvenile crime for any town of its size in the country'.<sup>582</sup> Finally, at Manchester in February 1938 it was claimed that minor juvenile offences in the C Division had been cut down by half in the last four months, since the founding of the club the previous year.<sup>583</sup> Consequently, there is some evidence that the clubs did have a positive impact on juvenile crime in their local area, however these statistics may not completely reflect the reality of the situation. As noted above, there was a general decline in juvenile crime across the nation during the period.<sup>584</sup> Moreover, in his 1982 book on crime during World War II, historian Edward Smithies argued that the promotion of boys' clubs by the police as a 'cure' for juvenile delinquency was fundamentally flawed in that the clubs only attracted 'those boys who were "clubbable": delinquents would not go to such places.' He added that a contemporary Home Office memorandum noted that 'the "respectable" club' did 'not attract the undisciplined youth of the streets,' and the Chief Constable of Liverpool noted that during a three month period from '1936-7 over 10 per of boys dealt with by the courts in the city were found to be members of youth

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<sup>579</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 18.

<sup>580</sup> Russell and Russell, *Lads' Clubs*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid*, p. 252.

<sup>582</sup> 'Mr J.W.A. Danby', *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 December 1931, p. 12.

<sup>583</sup> Manchester City Police Lads' Club Press Cuttings, p. 6.

<sup>584</sup> Emsley, *Crime and Society*, p. 67.

organisations and clubs.’<sup>585</sup> Therefore, when contemplating the police-led boys’ club model as a method of tackling youth crime it is necessary to underline its limitations and consider some notes for caution.

There are three main factors that limit the replication of the police-led boys’ club today: the concept of ‘manliness’, the role of volunteering and lack of optimism in the youth justice system. Firstly, police clubs aimed to produce good citizens through teaching the right sort of masculinity: the idea of ‘manliness’, which also encouraged gender conformity, is something which is not acceptable today. It is debatable whether it is appropriate to encourage any sort of violence, in the club context, even in the restrained forum of the boxing ring. As discussed in Chapter Five, in the 1940s boxing had it detractors amongst the police. Lincoln Chief Constable, W.S. Hughes, saw boxing ‘fights’ as a forum in which ‘self-control’ was lost rather than taught. Returning to the present day, boxing is a hotly debated topic amongst medical professionals. Shaun Rudd in the *British Medical Journal*, highlights the negative impact of boxing as a sport that is ‘predicated on violence and inflicting maximum impact on your opponent.’ He adds that the argument that boxing is ‘a valid outlet for aggression, especially for disenfranchised young men and boys...neglects the costs to health services’ caused by injuries such as ‘chronic traumatic brain injury’; and suggests that football could be used much more effectively ‘to teach teamwork and discipline to disadvantaged youth.’<sup>586</sup>

Secondly, costs in the clubs were kept low as police officers volunteered in their spare time. Their motivations included Christian duty and the chance of promotion. UK Church membership has declined from 10.6 million in 1930 (roughly 30% of the population) to 5.4 million in 2013 (around 10% of the population).<sup>587</sup> This statistic suggests that police membership of Christian organisations will have also declined, along with the concept of overt Christian social mission. It may be difficult today to secure police officer volunteers now that paths to promotion are more transparent.

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<sup>585</sup> Edward Smithies, *Crime in Wartime: A Social History of Crime in World War II*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982, p. 174.

<sup>586</sup> Shaun Rudd et al, ‘Should we ban boxing?’ *British Medical Journal* 352 (2016), p. 389.

<sup>587</sup> ‘Christianity in the UK’, Faith Survey, at <http://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>, accessed 13 December 2018.

Thirdly, the interwar period, in comparison to today, was a time of extreme optimism about the eradication of juvenile crime. There is a feeling in the literature produced by the police clubs and indeed the wider boys' club movement of the time that they had more or less solved the problem of juvenile delinquency, or at least defined the areas of youth crime they could solve by helping the boys who were not bad enough to send to borstal. This optimism is no better illustrated than in the passage from Manchester's 1938-9 annual report cited in the section above on boxing, that proclaims: 'Where the Police and local youth get together...there seems to be no limit to the amount of good which may accrue for the community in general.'<sup>588</sup>

Historian Clive Emsley has established that although it is uncertain whether juvenile delinquency has increased or decreased over the course of the twentieth century, and that efforts to limit such crime over the period have had similar motivations, optimism regarding their efficacy has dwindled. At the beginning of the twentieth century many commentators such as Dain ascribed criminal behaviour to 'high spirits' which, with the correct guidance, could be harnessed for the good of society. By the end of the century, however, such positive arguments, in view of the rise in crime statistics had almost vanished even amongst liberal commentators.<sup>589</sup>

In addition, other notes for caution include: the possibility that the police-led boys' club movement was limited in its reach, and the club at Norwich may have been an exception; the unintentional consequences that can sometimes result from initiatives designed to prevent youth crime; and, most significantly, child protection considerations. Springhall detected a fundamental flaw in the boys' club movement. He argued that boys' clubs were 'much more attractive to the upwardly-aspiring upper-working-class or lower-middle-class parent than to the families of the non-respectable "rough" working class who supplied the bulk of the "hooligan" element in the towns and cities.' As even boys' clubs could be beyond the financial means of the poorest, let alone the more expensive uniformed organisations such as the Boys' Brigade and Boy Scouts. Springhall concluded that the boys and young men who frequented boys' clubs were those already immersed in the culture of working-class 'respectability' 'through parental

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<sup>588</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1938-9*, p. 18.

<sup>589</sup> Emsley, *Crime and Society*, p. 82.



encouragement' and 'church attendance' not the 'street corner' boys 'the propaganda so constantly claimed that they were trying to reach'.<sup>590</sup> Consequently, Norwich, which provides much of the material in this study, may well have been exceptional in its reach. It may have been the only truly successful club, carried through by the personality of one charismatic man who styled himself as an expert in tackling juvenile delinquency. Norwich was an exceptionally large club, listing 3756 members for the year 1930-1931 for example. Its annual boxing competition drew up to 7,000 spectators.<sup>591</sup> According to the 1931 Census there were 4,405 boys aged 15 to 19 years of age in Norwich.<sup>592</sup> Therefore, it is probable that most of the youth of Norwich passed through the doors at some point, not just poor, working-class boys.

Several criminologists have highlighted the unintentional negative consequences of initiatives that aim to prevent youth violence. Laura Kelly has argued that the impact of 'programmes that use sport and other activities to reduce crime', for example, are limited by their 'inability to alter substantially the adverse socio-structured contexts in which youth offending criminalization and social exclusion are most likely occur'.<sup>593</sup> With regards to police participation in prevention programmes, Tim Newburn has warned that even informal interaction between young people and the police can result in the former becoming permanently 'stigmatised' or 'suspect' in the eyes of the police and community.<sup>594</sup> Moreover, not all interventions work. An American intervention programme did more harm than good when sending young people on prison visits. What was meant to discourage criminal activity actually glamourized the criminal lifestyle and youths involved in the programme were shown to be more likely to commit crime.<sup>595</sup> Consequently, reviving police-led clubs could have negative consequences. Such clubs

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<sup>590</sup> John Springhall, 'Building character in the British boy: the attempt to extend Christian manliness to working-class adolescents, 1880-1914', in J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, (eds), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987, p. 70.

<sup>591</sup> National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Fourteen to Eighteen: The Critical Years of Boyhood, Annual Report, 1930-1*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1931, p. 34.

<sup>592</sup> 'Norwich District', A Vision of Britain Through Time, at [www.visionofbritain.org/unit/10168697/cube/AGESEX\\_85UP](http://www.visionofbritain.org/unit/10168697/cube/AGESEX_85UP), accessed 14 December 2018.

<sup>593</sup> Laura Kelly, 'Representing and Preventing Youth Crime and Disorder: Intended and Unintended Consequences of Targeted Youth Programmes in England', *Youth Justice* 12.2 (2012), p. 112.

<sup>594</sup> Tim Newburn, 'Policing Youth Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime: Time for Reform?', *Journal of Children's Services* 6.2 (2011), p. 98.

<sup>595</sup> Anthony Petrosino et al, 'Scared Straight and Other Juvenile Awareness Programs for Preventing Juvenile Delinquency: A Systematic Review of the Randomized Experimental Evidence,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 589 (2003) p. 41

could have limited impact on members' wider social context, associating with the police could mark them out as problematic within the view of the community, and the use of boxing, for example, could glamourise violent behaviour.

Most important, however, is how the landscape of child protection has altered within the past eighty years. The idea of encouraging 'friendship' between police officers and youths sounds inappropriate to modern ears, especially in light of the allegations of child abuse in sports clubs that have emerged. Recently, reports of historical child sex abuse in football clubs broke in the British media, after an NSPCC hotline, commissioned by the Football Association, was set up dedicated to 'sexual abuse victims in football'. By November 30<sup>th</sup> 2016, 'more than a quarter of UK police forces' were 'looking into allegations of historical child sex abuse' after 250 reports had been made to the police including from 'more than 20 former players'.<sup>596</sup> By December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 reports had risen to 350 and the *Telegraph* quoted 'Chief Constable Simon Bailey, the NPCC's lead for child protection' saying that 'the number of victims was "an indicative figure only", and that with information still being collated numbers could change'.<sup>597</sup> Greater Manchester Police alone were investigating 35 reports by the same date.<sup>598</sup> By 9<sup>th</sup> December the National Police Chiefs' Council disclosed that 98 clubs had been named and 83 potential suspects had 'been identified in connection with allegations of historical child sexual abuse in football'.<sup>599</sup>

With regards to the investigation of historical child sex offences 'police chiefs' are often depicted by the media in a very affirmative way, as the experts investigating the allegations with the ultimate aim of bringing the abusers to justice. The positive role of the police in dealing with allegations of child sex abuse, may cause them to wish to distance themselves from recreating the aspects of the boys' clubs that focused on the

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<sup>596</sup> 'Football child sex abuse: number of police forces investigating rises to 13,' *The Guardian*, 30 November 2016, at <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/nov/30/football-child-sex-abuse-police-forces-investigating-13>, accessed 3 December 2016.

<sup>597</sup> 'Football child sex abuse: 350 victims come forward, police chiefs reveal', *Telegraph*, 1 December 2016, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/01/football-child-sex-abuse-350-victims-come-forward-say-police/>, accessed 3 December 2016.

<sup>598</sup> 'GMP investigates 35 historical allegations of child sex abuse in football', *Manchester Evening News*, 1 December 2016, at <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/gmp-investigates-35-historical-allegations-12261099>, accessed 3 December 2016.

<sup>599</sup> 'Police confirm 83 potential suspects identified in football sexual abuse scandal', *The Guardian*, 9 December 2016, at <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/dec/09/police-confirm-83-potential-suspects-identified-in-child-sex-abuse-scandal>, accessed 9 December 2016.

‘friendship’ or ‘older brother’ relationship between boys and men stressed in a Manchester *Evening Chronicle* article from February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938 entitled ‘Police Friends of Youth’;<sup>600</sup> or the article in a 1931 *Police Review* that claimed that the ‘proud’ aim of ‘Norwich Lads’ Club and similar institutions’ was ‘to bring the boy and the Bobby together in friendly and fruitful co-operation’;<sup>601</sup> or the Duke of Gloucester’s comment regarding Norwich that: ‘From the start, the Club has been a great success and has taught the boys to look upon the Police as their friends.’<sup>602</sup> This sort of language feels inappropriate in a modern context which emphasises an, albeit friendly, but professional relationship between mentor and mentee. The following quote, used in the previous chapter that describes Manchester City Police Lads’ Club’s weekend camp is perhaps one of the best examples of how times have changed:

Picture in the mind’s eye a group of boys, ages ranging from 14 to 18 years, reaching Camp by cycle about 3 p.m. on a Saturday, after a comfortable hour’s ride from Manchester. Immediately, they shed all clothing and don bathing slips, and, with nothing more than this to impede free movement, they wander, run, and jump through fields; go in and out of the river at will, climb trees; play field games; sing and shout until they are hoarse; and through it all feel the fresh air and sunshine playing on their bodies.<sup>603</sup>

The description is accompanied in the club’s annual report by a photograph of the boys all stripped down to the waist enjoying a picnic. On the one hand, the quote innocently evokes a rural idyll, but viewed from the perspective of modern safeguarding considerations there is an alarming amount of nakedness and unsupervised play, and it emphasises the vulnerability of the boys’ position. Finally, bearing in mind the extent of interaction between children and police officers, the possibility of child abuse cannot be ruled out. Moreover, the reporting of such crimes would have been hugely problematic for the victims, as who would they have reported the crimes to? Likewise, it has been shown that abusers tend to gravitate towards roles that give them access to young people.<sup>604</sup>

Thus, the example of the police-led club should be viewed within the framework of limitations and notes for caution detailed above. The clubs did to some extent offer a

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<sup>600</sup> Manchester City Police Lads’ Club Press Cuttings, p. 5

<sup>601</sup> ‘The Boy and the Bobby’, *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, 12 June 1931, p. 496.

<sup>602</sup> Dain, *Police Welfare Work*, p. 21.

<sup>603</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1940-41*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>604</sup> ‘Safeguarding’, Nord Anglia Education, at <https://university.nae.school/mod/page/view.php?id=9345>, accessed 27 November 2018.

‘positive alternative’ to recreation found on the city streets and, were a forum where ‘trusted relationships’ could be built to the extent to which potential employers felt they could offer employment to club members. The police officers who founded them and those who engaged in the day-to-day activities with youths felt that they were dealing directly with the problem of youth crime through preventative measures. However, it is impossible to gauge the actual effect they had upon the boys who attended as little evidence of their experience remains. In light of Humphries and Tebbutt’s research, noted in the introduction to this thesis, boys may have attended the clubs for pragmatic reasons and actively subverted the noble aims of the clubs when the opportunity arose.

### **Conclusion**

It has been established that investigation into the history of youth justice is necessary to provide a context for modern narratives of juvenile delinquency that may be incorrectly informing government policy. Boxing is and was used to temper violent tendencies exhibited by certain types of masculinities through engendering respect and control. Using the Serious Violence Strategy as a case study, one can directly link elements of the police-led boys’ club to current approaches to tackling youth crime which opens discussion about whether certain aspects of the clubs could be replicated today. Although there is a degree of evidence that some of the activities the police-led boys’ clubs in the interwar and early post-war period offered, could be beneficial today, their success even at the time was difficult to gauge. Moreover, caution must be exercised, as the example of the police-led club has its limitations and not all aspects of the clubs can be easily replicated, most significantly child protection considerations demand that the relationship between police and young people must remain absolutely professional so that it cannot be misconstrued or abused.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

A variety of conclusions are drawn from research into police-led boys' clubs of the interwar and immediate post-war period. In order to explore these, firstly the broader points of the thesis are considered, along with its limitations and thoughts on the direction of future research. Secondly, conclusions regarding the main themes of the thesis such as the place of the clubs within the wider boys' club movement, working-class and middle-class cultures, masculinity, camping and contemporary relevance are addressed. Finally, the research conclusions are considered within the context of the history of policing, youth movements, governance and physical culture.

Research into police-led boys' clubs has investigated a subject not hitherto looked into by historians and has mined new primary source material accordingly. The existence of at least 15 police-led clubs was revealed, most of which were previously unknown to historians. The number of clubs under scrutiny meant that the research topic was relatively contained and provided an ideal thesis-length investigation. There may have been more police-led clubs, but after an exhaustive search through extant annual reports and digitised newspaper articles no more could be detected, although this could change with the digitisation of more local newspapers. On the other hand, police-led boys' clubs may have been a niche movement comparable in size and scope (although not ethos) with one of the smaller woodcraft groups. Police-led clubs were rooted in the 'child saving' movement of the nineteenth century which aimed to remove young people from the negative influence of the home or streets, and the clubs were part of the interwar resurgence of these ideas. The high-ranking police officers who founded the clubs were 'moral entrepreneurs' who sought, amid fears of moral and sexual deviance, to control their charges steering them into gender conformity and respectable masculinity. They wanted the boys to learn self-control and restraint through physical activities such as boxing, gymnastics or camping, with the ultimate aim of turning them into good citizens. In doing this the police were also tapping into the movement that desired to regenerate and rebuild the nation and empire after the two world wars, hence their emphasis upon health and the presence of doctors and dentists in most of the clubs. It is difficult to identify who exactly attended the police-led boys' clubs, as no membership records seem to remain. The clubs were certainly aimed at working-class boys from poor backgrounds,

police at Manchester tried to recruit members on street corners for example, but the truth may have been quite different. At Norwich, which had thousands of members annually, the whole boy population of the city seemed to be in attendance which included middle-class and grammar school boys. Similarly, the success of the clubs is very difficult to measure. The police felt they were having a positive impact and felt they could provide evidence to prove it, in reality however, their ‘successes’ may have simply reflected general crime trends. All that can be concluded for certain is that they believed they were personally doing something to tackle youth crime and that sense of agency must have given them a degree of satisfaction.

It is important to note that the research in question faces certain limitations, these limitations centre upon the archival material available; further considerations regarding state funding, team sports and the institutional focus of the thesis; and themes such as gender, ethnicity and transnational history. Manchester City Police Lads’ Club was the only club with a complete archive; the rest were very fragmentary, leaving a lot of information derived from newspaper articles. It would have been useful to locate more annual reports, but very few of these seem to have survived. Around 15 clubs have been identified so far, but there may have been more. Due to the completeness of the archive at Manchester and the efforts of Dain in promoting his vision at Norwich these two clubs dominate the research, with Hull providing the next best coverage due to extant newspaper articles. As more local newspapers are digitised and become available online, it may be possible to chart the fortunes of a wider number of police-led clubs and even discover new ones. In fact, as noted in Chapter Four, the clubs at Hull were visited in 1947 by representatives from other police forces which suggests that police-led clubs may have been established after that date.

With regards to further considerations relating to this study the significance of state funding via local educational authorities and youth service funding has not been explored. Further investigation could shed light upon the relationship between the police-led club and the state alongside voluntary organisations, and reveal whether their funding was different from other boys’ clubs. The significance of boxing has been explored in great detail, but the importance of other sports, such as gymnastics, and in particular team sports, such as football and cricket, is not addressed at any length. Research into the role of team sports, which offer a very different dynamic from boxing, within the police-led

club could elucidate upon how different forms of masculinities were used within that setting. The thesis is institutional in its focus and consequently the boys' parents and families are not visible within it. This is due to both the lack of material pertaining to the boys and their families' experience of the clubs and the reflection that to fully explore this aspect would have limited other scope.

The thesis focuses almost exclusively on the experience of boys and men. Therefore, there is potential to expand upon the themes of gender, ethnicity and transnational history. Women are mentioned mainly in passing as helpers and members of necessitous needs committees, with the exception of a fencing instructor, but they were certainly present within the club set-up. The experience of British ethnic minorities is absent from this study. Nevertheless, the front cover of Swansea's 1938 annual report is illustrated with the photographic portraits of four boys one of which is Afro-Caribbean, and a young black boy boxing features prominently in the Pathe film described in Chapter Five: tantalising glimpses into an aspect of police-led boys' club history that is yet to be explored. In addition, the interwar publications of the NABC present evidence of the existence of five police-led clubs in British Ceylon.<sup>605</sup> Research into police-led clubs in the British colonies could explore how the concepts of good citizenship and nation-building were exported by the British Empire. Thus, bringing a more ethnically diverse and transnational dimension to the phenomenon of the police-led boys' club.

Research into police-led boys' clubs has shown that the extent to which they were a phenomenon in their own right was limited, as they shared many characteristics with the wider boys' club movement. Their place within the national boys' club movement and relationship with working-class and middle-class communities demonstrates this. When viewing police-led boys' clubs in a national context, it is evident that they shared many characteristics with the wider boys' club movement and their emergence corresponded with an upsurge in the boys' club movement as a whole. Police-led clubs were generally situated, like many other boys' clubs, in impoverished urban areas with high levels of unemployment concentrated within the industrial central belt of the nation. Citizenship was central to the vision behind police-led clubs as well as the nationwide boys' club

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<sup>605</sup> Alexander Paterson, 'The Police Boys' Club', *The Boy – A Magazine Devoted to the Welfare of Boys* 2.1 (1928), pp. 4-5; National Association of Boys' Clubs, *Annual Report and Balance Sheet, 1938*, London: National Association of Boys' Clubs, 1938.

movement, although the police felt they were ideally situated to build boys' characters and produce good citizens. Similarly, with regards to juvenile delinquency, boys' clubs were seen by contemporary commentators as a method to prevent crime. However, by taking on the challenge themselves the police felt they were dealing directly with the problem of juvenile crime by engaging in preventative social work, to the extent that they felt they had created their own nationwide boys' club movement.

With regards to the role of the police-led boys' club within the working-class community their approach was dictated by boys' club publications and the concerns of the Chief Constables who founded them. Echoing the aims of the wider boys' club movement, police clubs had a role in teaching self-control and good citizenship, and it was believed that the effects of this in the working-class community were far enough reaching to reduce incidents of juvenile crime and even improve the health of the locality. Low-ranking police officers were motivated to volunteer in these clubs for a variety of reasons such as opportunities for promotion and self-improvement, as a forum to express their masculinity; or through a sense of Christian or civic duty. Comparable to other boys' clubs, police-led clubs were local community centres, forming part of the fabric of local working-class society together with other social institutions such as churches and public houses. The working-class police officers who ran them on a daily basis were participating in a service to their local community. Police-led clubs faced the same challenges as other boys' clubs from competing attractions, but those who did attend had affectionate memories of their time spent within the clubs and on their camping holidays.

Police-led boys' clubs presented aspects of both a bottom-up working-class and a top-down middle-class initiative. Although they were concerned about juvenile delinquency and sought to remove boys' from inappropriate environments, they were not purely an example of middle-class interventionism. The middle-class Chief Constables who founded the clubs mostly began their careers as working-class Police Constables, they rose through the ranks to obtain important places within their local social hierarchy. Club founders acted as moral guardians of their local communities. The management of the police-led clubs was a forum where working-class and middle-class people could work together towards shared goals. Like other boys' clubs, police-led clubs were predominantly funded by local middle-class individuals, they received attention from doctors and dentists, and enjoyed, in some cases, aristocratic or royal patronage. In



addition, working-class officers organised and ran their daily activities and accordingly must have had a great deal of input in shaping the club environment.

Where police clubs departed slightly from that of the wider boys' club movement was in their pure focus on physical pursuits and sporting activities. Such pursuits were ever-present in police club schedules. Sports activities, especially boxing and gymnastics, were used to teach self-control and create good citizens. However, boxing was not without its detractors even amongst the police. In offering physical pursuits, police-led clubs aimed to divert boys' energies away from inappropriate leisure activities found on the city streets, where it was possible to fall into crime and anti-social behaviour. Instead they promoted 'friendship' and camaraderie with other club members and, most importantly, the police instructors who were presented as ideal role models to the boys. Boyish energy and 'high spirits' was seen as normal and part of the make-up of the 'ideal' boy. If harnessed correctly, club organisers argued, they were a sign of manliness. In these respects, police-led clubs reinforced the gender norms of the period and did not depart from the ideas presented in literature published by the NABC, for example. A strong work ethic was also key to the 'manly' boy and police-led clubs aimed to prepare boys for employment, providing them with direct links to employers and teaching them skills which could be utilised in their future careers. Physical fitness in boys was associated with moral fitness and was seen as an essential aspect of good citizenship and nation-building. The role of masculinity and physicality in the police-led club did not depart particularly from the example of the wider boys' club movement, apart from in the range of activities on offer. Police clubs focused on sports and physical pursuits, whereas the NABC did promote some more sedentary activities, such as handicrafts, as having equally manly outcomes.

The character-building aspects of police-led club camps, including the emphasis upon friendship, the vision behind the camps and the idealisation of nature, do not deviate particularly from the experience of the wider boys' club movement. By participating in camp activities away from the city streets and engaging with nature, boys were encouraged to build their characters, become manly, be good citizens, and be resilient in the face of adversity. As within the regular club sessions, friendship was encouraged at camp, between the boys and between the boys and the police officer organisers, who acted as role models. Although the extent to which the boys' experiences echoed the aims

behind police-club camps boys is debatable, as it was often their only holiday, they would have had more pragmatic motivations.

The police-led club was very much a phenomenon of the interwar and immediate post-war period as direct police involvement in the clubs seems to have been phased out from the 1950s onwards. However, an additional question has been raised by research into these clubs centring on its implications for modern youth justice, highlighting that considering what to do with boys is still very much in the minds of social commentators. In addition to attempting to investigate a fascinating area of early to mid-twentieth century social history this thesis is relevant to current criminological research, as it is relevant to modern approaches to tackling youth crime. It was established that investigation into the history of youth justice is necessary to challenge modern narratives of the ‘newness’ of juvenile delinquency that may be incorrectly informing government policy. There is evidence that the same ground is being re-trodden. Using the Serious Violence Strategy as a case study, elements of the police-led boys’ club can be directly linked to current approaches to tackling youth crime, opening discussion about whether certain aspects of the clubs could be replicated today. Nonetheless, the example of the police-led club has many limitations and not all aspects of the clubs can be easily replicated; most significantly child protection considerations demand that the relationship between police and young people must remain absolutely professional, and open to inspection, so that it cannot be misconstrued or abused, or place young people in a vulnerable situation. This is the key difference between modern approaches to youth justice and those exercised within the forum of the police-led clubs. Police-led club organisers did not invest boys’ club members with any agency, they were simply objects that could be converted into good citizens. It is unlikely the idea that boys’ could be abused by club instructors, would have ever been considered by police club organisers.

Returning to the premise that the police-led boys’ club conformed in many ways to the wider boys’ club movement, it is perhaps unsurprising that in this the police were neither radical, nor departed from the common views of the times. The police may well be a barometer for contemporary social attitudes, for example the sexism and homophobia current in the 1970s and 1980s has been steadily replaced by more inclusive attitudes that have eventually allowed an openly gay woman to be appointed as Commissioner of the London Metropolitan police in 2017. However, there were a few significant differences.

Police-led clubs concentrated on physical activities and sports, especially boxing and gymnastics, and did not offer a wide variety of sedentary pursuits, such as handicrafts. This may have been due to the hyper-masculine nature of policemen themselves, eschewing quieter activities, or simply that the pursuits they offered were inexpensive, and ideal for stretched budgets. Moreover, it is important that the police bothered to get directly involved in boys' clubs in the first place. The main aim of the boys' club movement was to remove boys from the streets and the temptations of juvenile delinquency in order to turn them into good citizens. However, in opening their own clubs, the police would have felt that they were dealing directly with the problem of juvenile delinquency, a problem that they had to actively engage with as part of their duties on the frontline of policing.

With regards to what the participation in boys' clubs said about the police themselves the research has shown that the role of the police-led boys' club within the working-class community was a complex one. Low-ranking police officers were attracted to volunteering in these clubs for a variety of reasons which included: the chance to improve their prospects of promotion; as part of an overarching concept of service to the community; opportunities for self-improvement and the expression of their masculinity; they may have been motivated through a sense of Christian or civic duty; or a combination of all these factors. Moreover, there is no clear answer to whether police-led boys' clubs were an example of a bottom-up working-class or a top-down middle-class initiative, as in the first place it is difficult to define what exactly it meant to be middle-class in the interwar and immediate post-war period, as it was a fluid concept. The middle-class Chief Constables who founded the clubs, for example, had mostly begun their careers as working-class Police Constables and eventually rose through the ranks to command valued places in local hierarchies, and sometimes nationally, as 'moral entrepreneurs' or 'moral heroes'.

It is important to consider how the police-led boys' club fitted within the ethos of interwar youth movements and debates on physicality and health. Police-led boys' clubs, like other youth movements, attracted young people with recreational opportunities, education and welfare, although they were not particularly concerned with church attendance unlike

many other organisations.<sup>606</sup> The police clubs inhabited the more traditional and conservative end of the youth movement spectrum. They were concerned with the welfare of their members and aimed to remove them from the moral contamination of the streets, but were not especially bothered about deepening the experiences of the boys through informal learning, unlike some of the more progressive organisations.<sup>607</sup> The police-led clubs had more in common with the Boys Brigade and Scouts who exhibited militaristic values, than with the pacifist woodcraft movements. However, they were similar to the woodcraft movements in their niche status, different from the Scouts and Guides who had a wide-ranging influence on popular culture. Police-led boys' clubs were an example of the diverse nature of youth movements and the diverse experience of interwar youth. Like other youth movements, military or pacifist in outlook, the police clubs aimed to control their members' behaviour and encourage self-governance to create good citizens. They were part of the social welfare movement that sought to control young people in their home, school, workplace and leisure time.<sup>608</sup> What the boys at the police clubs thought about this, on the other hand, is impossible to gauge. Some may have resisted adult control by engaging in the 'cultural tradition' of 'larking about'.<sup>609</sup> Finally, the police-led boys' clubs' preoccupation with physical activities, although in many ways dictated by limited funding, fed into the contemporary obsession with health and physical culture. Police club literature linked good health and physical fitness to moral fitness and ideal masculinity, and emphasised the role of these factors in producing young men who could rebuild the nation and empire. In this, their arguments did not diverge from those used in contemporary discourses about health and physical culture, including those on positive eugenics and the need to regenerate the nation by eradicating deviance and disease.

Finally, although police involvement in boys' clubs largely died out by the 1960s, in some respects their spirit lives on in modern police attendance centres. Such centres are run by police officers and cater for offenders aged 18 to 24 who have committed a crime for which they could have been given a custodial sentence. Those ordered to go, spend several hours there each Saturday, attending lectures, using the gym, and playing football.

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<sup>606</sup> Hendrick, *Images of Youth*, pp.177-79.

<sup>607</sup> Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 103.

<sup>608</sup> Bradford, 'Managing the Spaces of Freedom', pp. 192-94.

<sup>609</sup> Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels*, pp. 1-27.

Mark Wilkinson, a retired Detective Sergeant, who runs a centre in Manchester, states their purpose is to put ‘people back on track to being good members of society’, a sentiment that would not be out of place in a police-led boys’ club annual report.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> ‘Attendance Centres Supporting Change’, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company, at <http://www.cgmcrc.co.uk/attendance-centres-supporting-change/>, accessed 28 October 2019.

## Photo Appendix: Activities in the clubs at Norwich and Hyde

**Figure 1: Boxing at Norwich Lads' Club<sup>611</sup>**



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<sup>611</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.

**Figure 2: Norwich Lads' Club Hosting a Boxing Contest<sup>612</sup>**



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<sup>612</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.

**Figure 3: Norwich Lads' Club's 'Junior Police Force'**<sup>613</sup>



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<sup>613</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.



**Figure 4: Norwich Lads' Club's Library**<sup>614</sup>



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<sup>614</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.

**Figure 5: Singing at Norwich Lads' Club<sup>615</sup>**



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<sup>615</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.

**Figure 6: Gymnastics at Norwich Lads' Club<sup>616</sup>**



Copyright on this image has expired.

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<sup>616</sup> File SO 182 820X7, Slides of Photographs of Lads' Club and Activities, 1920s-1930s.

**Figure 7: Gymnastics at Hyde Lads' Club<sup>617</sup>**



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<sup>617</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.



**Figure 8: Hyde Lads' Club Football Team<sup>618</sup>**



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<sup>618</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.

**Figure 9: Hyde Lads' Club Cricket Team<sup>619</sup>**



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<sup>619</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.

**Figure 10: Ladies Cricket Match at Hyde Lads' Club<sup>620</sup>**



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<sup>620</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.

**Figure 11: Fancy Dress at Hyde Lads' Club<sup>621</sup>**



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<sup>621</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.



**Figure 12: Hyde Lads' Club Sports Day's Urban Setting<sup>622</sup>**



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<sup>622</sup> File DD346/3/7, Hyde Lads' Club, Photograph Album, 1932-1933.

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